

waiting on their tenants or driving them about the country. Life in these out-buildings wears a picnic aspect, jollity and social ease prevailing.

All houses occupied by the people are blessed by the *cure* shortly before or after their completion. It is a ceremony many think indispensable to avert misfortune and disease. Their religion teaches them that all in this world comes from and will return to God, and that it is through his gracious goodness we are enabled to enjoy all we possess. These facts command their continual gratitude. They will thus stop at the sound of the Angelus to say a short prayer three times a day, and cross themselves before beginning or completing every act of their lives. Everything they own they offer up to God, thanking him that they are permitted to enjoy these blessings. As soon as the house or out-building has its walls raised, they attach to the chimney or to one gable a few branches of palm (*le bouquet*, they call it) and discharge some fire-arm by way of salute. For what purpose they affix this *bouquet* is difficult to ascertain, except that it is a custom of their ancestors, as they will tell you. But doubtless there lingers in the mind some pleasant association, even with the unlettered, of the branch that is always connected with triumph and victory, and that was waved before our Lord on his entry into the chosen city. In France the workmen still follow this custom, and there it is done to remind the owner that he is expected to celebrate the event in some social way.

An interesting feature of the domestic picture is the large group of healthy, merry children, whose boisterous mirth keeps the house in an uproar. If the people have with much reason been credited with habits and dispositions of patriarchal simplicity, they no less resemble the ancient race in the strength of their domestic affection and love of offspring. The race is vigorous, the country large, and modern views and Malthusian theories, which check the population of lands more thickly settled, are as yet unknown in the old St. Lawrence region. How else could some sixty-five thousand of them, defeated, dejected, and abandoned colonists at the time of the cession in 1759, have swollen into the mighty flood of population, some one million seven hundred thousand at the present day, engaged in the cultivation and development of British North America's illimitable resources?

Before the cession a royal bounty was granted to all young men marrying before the age of twenty, and to young girls wedding before sixteen. Parents who had more than ten children were also in receipt of a royal gratuity. In most households there are from a dozen to sixteen children, and even as many as twenty-eight. Two prominent officials of the province of Quebec are twenty-sixth children, and fine specimens of physical