

object in view: the creation of an episcopal seminary at Quebec.

(*) Early in 1663, he made overtures to King Louis XIV on that subject, and laid before him a paper containing his views. He was successful, so far, that on the 26th of March, he was enabled to publish a pastoral letter announcing to the faithful of Old and New France, the speedy execution of his long cherished undertaking. The letters patent were granted in the month of April following; and these letters patents of that remote period are the ground work on which were afterwards based the several letters patent, *lettres d'amortissement*, ordinances and acts of parliament under which the Seminary of Quebec still holds the extensive and valuable properties we hereafter allude to, and the revenues of which are so nobly employed in the diffusion of knowledge and the inculcating of Christian virtue.

The Bishop returned to Quebec in the beginning of September, with Mr. de Mesy, who through his influence, had been appointed to supersede the baron d'Avangour, as governor, Mr. Gaudais, the newly appointed *commissaire du roi*; and Messrs. Ango des Maizerets and Pommier, priests. In the same vessel were three companies of soldiers, and about a hundred families of settlers. The Bishop and the new governor, were received with the greatest military and religious display, the guns were fired, and the bells rang at the same time, awaking the echoes of the vast solitudes and and of the uncultivated mountains of the neighbourhood.

Mgr. de Laval had, with him, the letters patent for the establishment of a *conseil supérieur*, the first executive and legislative body which Canada ever had, and which, being composed of certain public officers, in the absence of the elective principle, acted as a check on the omnipotence of the governor. That political institution was due in a great measure to the energetic representations of the Bishop.

Although busy with the establishment of new missions and with finishing and completing his cathedral, he gave his immediate attention to the educational wants of his people, encouraged the creation of the Canadian order of the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame, by the venerable Sister Marguerite Bourgeois, and opened several elementary schools in the towns and in the country: those for boys being generally kept by Franciscans or by young laymen who had received some education in the Jesuits college, and to whom the good fathers and the Bishop made a trifling allowance in addition to such fees as they might get from their pupils. Some of these schools existed up to the extinction of the order of Jesuits, and the confiscation of their property under the British Government; others were kept up still longer by Mgr. Laval's successors.

The corporation of the Seminary of Quebec was then in existence, and in course of being affiliated, as we have already stated, to the Seminary of the foreign missions of Paris, which was itself a vigorous offspring of the little hermitage of Monsieur de Bernières, at Caën; but although several young ecclesiastics were studying under its first members, it had no building of its own, and, in fact, no tangible and permanent existence.

With that earnestness of purpose, with that calm and steady activity for which the pious and energetic prelate will ever be admired, he acquired, one by one, several lots adjoining the parish church and *fabrique* ground, on which are now built the Seminary of Quebec and the Laval

University. At last, on the fourteenth of April, 1678, he laid, with great solemnity, the corner-stone of the new building, which he placed under the protection of the Holy Family.

There is undoubtedly, a great contrast between the modest looking house then in course of erection, and the imposing pile of the Laval University just now erected, and a front view of which we offer this day to our readers. But the one, as well as the other, possessed an invaluable advantage. The Seminary, which faces the river St. Lawrence, and the University, which faces the river Saint Charles, offer to their inmates that which is of no small effect in the training of the human mind: one of the most poetical and striking sceneries in the world.

The historian Charlevoix, in a letter to the Duchesse de Lesdignières, dated Quebec, 28th October, 1720—that is to say, thirty two years after the building of the Seminary—gives of this delightful spot the following brilliant and almost prophetic description:—

"The garden extends even over the brow of the rock, and commands a view of the whole roadstead. When the capital of New France, will be as flourishing as that of old France, (and there is no need of despairing, for Paris, for a length of time was less considerable than Quebec is now,) as far as the eye can reach, will be seen villages, chateaus and villas, and all these are already foreshadowed.—The Saint Lawrence, whose waters roll so majestically, coming from the extremities of the North and of the West, will be covered with ships.—The Island of Orleans and both banks of the two rivers will open to the view rich meadows and hills, and fertile plains: and for this, the only thing required is a more numerous population: when, a part of the borders of the river St. Charles, which winds its course so charmingly through a rich valley will be annexed to the city, of which it will, without doubt, become the most important quarter; when, the whole of the shore will be lined with magnificent quays and wharves,—the port be filled with splendid ships, and that we shall see from three to four hundred vessels laden with riches heretofore comparatively unknown and unvalued, and which will return laden with those of the old world in exchange; you will admit, madam, that this terrace will then present a *coup d'œil* that cannot be surpassed, and which is, even at present, extremely beautiful."

It was only on the 6th October, 1688, that sixty young boys were admitted into the college or *petit séminaire*, with the same peculiar dress which is still worn by those of the present time, and which has been adopted by almost every other catholic college in Lower Canada, with trifling alterations. It consisted then of a blue *capot* or frock coat, with white seam strings and an Indian like and *omnicolor* kind of a sash which has been lately replaced by a green woollen one. Up to that time, the young men who were intended to become priests followed the classes of the Jesuits until they were ready to begin their theological studies, but some of them were boarded in the Seminary. The Bishop had also established at St. Joachim, in the côte de Beaupré, now the county of Montmorency, a preparatory school, where the young *habitans* were taught, together with reading, writing, and arithmetic, some useful trade. Those among them who were remarkable for more than ordinary talent were sent to the Seminary to enter on their classical studies.

Among the first inmates of the college were fourteen Indian boys, who quite undaunted and ungovernable soon took again to the adventurous life of their tribes. Not one of them is to be found in the list of the young men who completed their studies between 1674 and 1685—which is as follows: "Pierre Volant, de Saint Claude, Charles Volant, Jean Pinguet, Paul Vachon, Jacques Denis, Claude Denis, Jean Guyon, Mathieu Damour, Denis Peuvret, François Grouard, Pierre Thierry, Jean Buisson de Saint Côme, François de Laval and Philippe Boucher." Eight of these became priests, one of them became a franciscan, (Jacques Denis) and the other four, Damour, Peuvret, Grouard and Laval (probably a nephew of the Bishop) followed worldly pursuits.

(*) *Esquisse de la vie et des travaux apostoliques de Mgr. Frs. Xavier de Laval Montmorency, premier évêque de Québec*, Québec: Côté et Cie., 1843—145 pages 80.

Esquisse biographique sur Mgr. de Laval, par l'abbé Brasseur de Bourbourg, Québec: Fréchette et Cie., 1855.

Opuscules manuscrits de M. le Commandeur Viger, et critique des ouvrages ci-dessus, par le même. Ubique passim.