

THE FIRST ROBIN.

THE wind still blows thro' leafless trees,
And cold the bitter northern breeze
Moans o'er the bare and frozen leas
And stubble field,
But yet unerring instinct sees
The winter yield.

Like unexpected news from sea,
Of ships, that were not thought to be
So near, thou, on yon frozen tree
Chirping away
Art come to herald unto me
The dawn of day.

Tho' cold thy lonely rest to night,
Thou knowest soon the sunshine bright,
Will come in welcome gleams of light,
To drive away
The dreary landscape meets thy sight
This winter day.

PIERCE GRAYDON.

A VIGOROUS MOVE.

CANADIANS have been too much, in the past, taken up with the events in the Republic to the south and too apt to be blind to the various signs of a vigorous and steady upbuilding of their own country. Looking into the great regions lying north and west of Ontario, we can see great changes since 1867.

People are apt to think of the great institutions of the cities, and to overlook a great corporation, that has for decades moved on its even way in the wilds and forests of our far North-West. The Hudson's Bay Company is known to urban dwellers chiefly through the works of R. M. Ballantyne, and most people cannot bring themselves to think calmly of the romantic and unusual business of this staid old company. However, the general work of the company may be left for another time; the object of the present article is to show that there are patriotic Canadians in the far north, and powerful corporations outside of the United States.

Stanley and Livingstone could say to the Geographical Society, that they had found certain physical features which would cause the changing of existing maps; but Sir Donald A. Smith can cable that society that his company had ordered a change in the geography of North America and had had that change carried out; and this strange proceeding occurred in this wise:—

Almost "since the time when the memory of man runneth not to the contrary," Rampart House, one of the most northern and western posts of the Hudson's Bay Company, stood on the north bank of the Porcupine River. It was situated in a pretty, sheltered cove on this tributary of the Yukon, and was supposed to be in 66° N. and 141° W., or a few miles on the Canadian side of the Alaskan boundary. This past summer, however, Mr. Turner of the United States Coast Survey, who with his party has been at work on the Alaska boundary for some time, discovered that the post was located at least thirty miles on the Alaska side of the line. The survey party did not order the company to leave United States territory; on the contrary, having enjoyed the hospitality of Mr. Frith, the factor, they were decidedly of opinion that Rampart House was a very useful sort of institution to have in the land of the free, and none of them thought for a moment that it would matter a straw to anybody had the post been a hundred miles further west in this vast wild region. But the Hudson's Bay Company trade under a British Charter and on the information being received, the removal of Rampart House was promptly ordered. This did not mean simply the moving of the factory itself with all its outbuildings, storehouses, residences, and so on; but it meant also the removal of the little town which had grown up about it, including a new church which was taken to pieces and moved in sections.

The new site is on the same bank of the swift-flowing Porcupine, and a good ten miles inside the Canadian boundary line, the little town having thus travelled forty miles in order that the Factor of the Honourable Hudson's Bay Company might still run up the Union Jack, when he chose, and that the unknown-to-the-world missionary might not have to ask for blessings upon "the President of the United States" in the place of his beloved "Sovereign Lady, Queen Victoria."

IOTA.

M. MAREY has succeeded in photographing the movements of an animal under water, taking proofs at the rate of fifty in a second, with exposures from 1-2000 to 1-3000 of a second. A set of twelve photographs gives all the phases of the undulations which the medusa impresses upon its umbrella of a locomotor apparatus. Another series exhibits a squid leaping out of the water. A ray has been taken in profile while waving the edges of its flat body; and the curious mode of progression of a comatula has been taken. In his lecture on caves at the meeting of the American association, Rev. Dr. Hovey exhibited a photograph made by L. Farini of Bridgeport, Ct., from an ordinary negative by means of the light of the fire-fly (*Elator phocana*).

OLD NEW-WORLD TALES.

THE ST. ETIENNES.

I.

THE scene of our tale is in the region which by the Aborigine of this "New World" was called "Migumaage," or Micmacland; which by the old Norse voyagers, about the close of the tenth century, was named "Markland," or woodland; which was, about six centuries afterwards, named "Acadie," or Acadia, by certain French voyagers, through their mistaking a Micmac common noun of place for a special local designation, and which is now known as "Nova Scotia," and—in part at least—"New Brunswick."

The history of that region, especially in what we may call its earlier and cruder manifestations, rather teems with incidents and passages to which we of the present day are apt to apply the epithet "romantic." Probably there are none of such passages which we shall find more interesting than that of the career and adventures of the two St. Etiennes, father and son.

Before introducing them upon the scene in question, let us briefly catalogue a few events which preceded their appearance upon it.

In 1604, one Pierre du Guast, Sieur de Monts, under a commission from Henry IV. of France, set sail, as an adventurer of the period, for the New World. He was accompanied by some men who were destined to become afterwards notable. There were with him Champlain, Champdoré, Pontgrave, and—not the least—Pontreincourt. After an uneventful voyage they discovered and entered the charming basin, called by the natives "Towabscot," or "Towabskik," (meaning, "it flows out between rocks"). Pontreincourt was so fascinated with the charms of this really beautiful land-locked basin, with its richly wooded islands and shores, that he at once besought his friend De Monts to make him a concession of the basin and surroundings, which was done on the instant. People were generous in the disposal of estates those times. Pontreincourt called the place "Port Royal."

The De Monts company spent their first winter disastrously, on Isle la Croix, in the river to which they gave the same name. In the spring the survivors of the party all moved back to Port Royal, and there Pontreincourt, at least, determined to make a permanent settlement. He set to work clearing a piece of ground and constructing a fort. Whilst Pontreincourt himself was pursuing further explorations, he left the clearing and building operations principally to Champlain, who has left us a particular description of the fort. It was situate on the northern or Granville shore, directly opposite the Isle de Biencourville—now, absurdly enough, called "Goat Island."

It may here be observed that from this time (1605) downwards there has been a continuous settlement of Europeans, or people of European origin, at Port Royal. Consequently Port Royal (now Annapolis Royal) is the oldest continuous European settlement in North America, North of St. Augustine, in Florida.

De Monts soon abandoned all his colonization schemes, but Pontreincourt was more pertinacious. He was formally confirmed by the king in his "Seigneurie of Port Royal." His friends among the French noblesse, as well as some of a sturdier sort, smiled on him, and at least enjoyed his hospitality. Marc Lescarbot, lawyer, historian and poet, has graphically described to us, in prose and verse, how festively and gloriously Pontreincourt and his friends, the poet included, spent the winter of 1606-07 at Port Royal.

It was in 1610 that Pontreincourt arrived out at Port Royal, on his third voyage from France. On that occasion he was accompanied by his eldest son, Charles de Biencourt, his second son, Jacques de Salazar, and also by his friend, Claude Turgis de St. Etienne, Sieur de la Tour, and his son, Charles Amador de St. Etienne. Young Biencourt was at this time about eighteen years of age, whilst the younger La Tour was about fourteen; and, from the commencement of their intercourse, these two youths seem to have tended towards a warm mutual friendship.

It is needless to dwell upon the struggles of Pontreincourt to sustain and extend his little colony at Port Royal during the few years succeeding this his most recent arrival, and during a part of which time Madame de Pontreincourt and all of his family were resident there with him; to recount the several voyages made to and from France by him and his son Biencourt; of the bickerings of the latter with the Jesuit priests, Biard and Masse, who were unpleasantly thrust upon him by his creditor, the pious Madame de Guercheville; or to describe the tedious business negotiations of both father and son among the capitalists of France. Eventually, however, Pontreincourt found himself called upon by King Louis XIII. to repair to the seat of war then going on in Europe, according to feudal obligations. The result was that almost immediately afterwards he fell at the siege of Mery-sur-Seine. This was some time in the year 1615, and through this event the eldest son—whom we may still call Biencourt—came into possession of all Pontreincourt's seigniorial and other rights in Acadie.

The young man continued to reside in Acadie, together with the two La Tours, father and son. He became particularly attached to Charles Amador de St. Etienne, the younger of the La Tours, whom he had made an ensign and afterwards his lieutenant. Biencourt had at this time only about a score of men under his command. The whole

party, for eight years succeeding the death of the older Pontreincourt, peacefully and diligently devoted themselves to hunting, farming and trading with the Indians. To facilitate business negotiations with the natives the adventurers had erected several forts or trading houses through the western part of Acadie. One establishment of this kind was set up by Charles de la Tour in 1613 at Port Lomeron or Lomeroy, from about this time called Port La Tour, and where he afterwards erected Fort St. Louis. The harbour, now known as that of Yarmouth, has also been called Lomeron.

At length, some time in 1623, Charles, now Sieur de Pontreincourt, died, aged thirty-one years. I know not where this event occurred, but I suspect that it was at the above-named Fort St. Louis. He left to his lieutenant, companion and friend, Charles Amador St. Etienne de la Tour, all the territories, properties, rights and privileges which he possessed in Acadie at the time of his death.

Whilst the Pontreincourts, La Tours, and their associates were thus carrying on their operations in Acadie, England was quietly assuming that the whole country belonged to her, and King James the I. of England and VI. of Scotland conceived a most extraordinary project for its English and Scottish settlement. Following his pedantic impulses—and "King Jamie" was nothing if not pedantic—he conferred upon the whole of Acadia, whatever that might comprise, the new latinized name of "Nova Scotia." To settle this country he, with the assistance of a favourite—and "King Jamie" was nobody without a favourite—named William Alexander, who probably concocted the whole scheme, determined upon the following most extraordinary plan. He set out to organize an almost nondescript semi-noble and semi-knightly titled order to be called the "Order of the Knights-Baronets of Nova Scotia." Like knights, its members were to have the momentous syllable "Sir" prefixed to their names, and like barons and other grades of nobility their titles were to be hereditary, but they were not to have seats in the House of Peers. Each of these baronets was to have an ample estate in Nova Scotia, upon which he was to make substantial settlements of colonists. There seems to be a mistiness and indefiniteness as to just what was to have been done in this direction.

The favourite, Alexander, was made the first of the new order, and to him and his baronets the whole of Nova Scotia was formally granted. Sir William Alexander, Baronet, was also created Earl of Stirling in the Scottish Peerage. It is amusing to read some of the charters and land grants made to these baronets, with their grand concessions and utterly incomprehensible descriptions. So far as Nova Scotia is concerned, nothing ever resulted from this momentous looking scheme. The fussy old king, always "hard up" so far as money was to be considered, but cunning in devices for what is called "raising the wind," did not hesitate even to sell these baroneties to replenish his coffers with the proceeds. After his death his son, Charles I., continued to carry out his designs with respect to the new-fangled order.

It may here be observed in passing, that there exist to-day some hundreds of these Baronets of Nova Scotia, a large proportion of whom are also members of the British Hereditary Peerage. Nova Scotia is the only colony in the British Empire which can boast of having a titled Order of its own—if that is a matter which calls for boasting. It may be further remarked that, a few years since, some feeble-minded efforts were made on their behalf, to have these Baronets reinstated in their quondam rights. The parties interested "on the other side" would have been perfectly safe to tell this titled host to go and take their lands, without any hindrance from Nova Scotia; for assuredly "no man of woman born" could now find any one of these grand estates, even with the description under the Great Seal in his hand. As already intimated those descriptions are for the most part quite incomprehensible; and the mysterious looking local names, which they flourish so profusely, are now non-existent.

To return to the practical results of King James' project—sometime in 1622 or 1623, the date is doubtful and history is rather dumb as to the whole affair, as a not very glorious one—Sir William Alexander actually did send out an expedition to Nova Scotia under the command of his son. We can learn nothing of the strength of the force. It is certain that they took possession of Port Royal, which was now without defences, and proceeded to erect a fort, on the mainland shore, north side, opposite Biencourville Island, and on the site of the old stockade built under the direction of Champlain, in 1605, and afterwards in 1613, and, during the absence of Pontreincourt, destroyed by Argall. This was called, as its site is still called, "the Scotch Fort."

Charles de la Tour was naturally desirous that his rights and privileges in Acadia, under the gift of his friend, should be recognized and confirmed by the King of France. Accordingly, on the 25th of July, 1627, he drew up a letter to the King, setting forth his claims. This letter he entrusted to his father, Claude de la Tour, who immediately set sail for France.

The mission proved a failure. La Tour and his ship were captured on the high seas by Sir David Kirk, a French Huguenot who had forsworn France and joined the English naval service, and, it would appear, had become one of the new Baronets.

La Tour, who was also a Huguenot, was taken prisoner to England. He found the Court of England wondrously seductive. He forgot or ignored the mission with which his son had entrusted him. He was made a Baronet of