

L'Escarbot speaks

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olony had their utrinecourt him- mber of 1606 r as Cape Mal- d of St. Croix, any misadven- als, he finally hich is now off that place, gone ashore, surprised by d or fatally . According , the Indians n the French ead were o sooner had n the Indians re they had cross erected bodies, and ility. De

Poutrinecourt, despairing of finding a favorable site for a new colony in a country enjoying a warmer climate, returned to Port Royal. His crew were sick and low-spirited, but they soon recovered their health and spirits when they rejoined their comrades, who listened with wonder to the narration of the perils of that unfortunate voyage.

L'Escarbot appears to have been the very life and soul of the little colony, for, naturally of a genial and lively temperament, he never liked to see anything like gloom and despondency among his companions. All his efforts were directed to infuse a spirit of kindly feeling among the little community. If anything occurred to damp their courage, his fertile mind soon devised some plan of chasing away forebodings of ill. When De Poutrinecourt and his party returned in such ill spirits from Cape Mallebane, they were met by a procession of Tritons, with Neptune at their head, who saluted the adventurers with merry songs. As they entered the arched gate-way they saw above their heads another happy device of L'Escarbot,—the arms of France and the King's motto, "*Deus proteget unum*," encircled with laurels. Under this were the arms of De Monts and De Poutrinecourt, with their respective mottos,—"*Dabit deus his quoque finem*," and "*In via virtuti nulla est via*,"—also surrounded with evergreens. L'Escarbot was a man of the world, who well understood the versatile character of his countrymen—how much they were affected by surrounding circumstances.

L'Escarbot sowed crops of wheat, rye, and barley, in the vicinity of the fort; he worked night and day in a garden; he read prayers when the priests were unwell and unable to officiate; he did more good by his cheery manners and merry talk than all the medicine poured down by the apothecary; he was the pleasantest companion at the festive board; yet amid the many duties that engrossed him, he found time for study.

The inmates of the fort—thanks to the liberality of De Monts and his associates—were well provided with everything requi-

site to make them comfortable. But L'Escarbot's ingenious mind did not fail him, even in respect to the daily supply of fresh provisions; for he created a new order for the especial benefit of the principal table at which De Poutrinecourt, himself, and thirteen others, sat daily. These fifteen gentlemen constituted themselves into l'Ordre de Bon Temps, one of whom was Grand Master for a day, and bound to cater for the company. Each tried, of course, to excel the other in the quantity of game and fish they were able to gather from the surrounding country, and the consequence was, De Poutrinecourt's table never wanted any of the luxuries that the river or forest could supply. At the dinner hour the Grand Master, with the insignia of his order, a costly collar around his neck, a staff in his hand, and a napkin on his shoulder, came into the hall at the head of his brethren, each of whom carried some dish. The Indians were frequent guests at their feasts, especially old Memberton, a famous Micmac or Souriquois chief, who always retained a warm attachment for the pale-faced strangers. Songs of *La Belle France* were sung; many a toast was drunk in some rare vintage,—the flames flew up the huge chimney,—the Indians squatted on the floor, laughing like the merriest Frenchmen. When the pipe went around—with its lobster-like bowl and tube elaborately worked with porcupine quills—stories were told, and none excelled the Indians themselves in this part of the entertainment. At last when the tobacco was all exhausted, the Grand Master resigned his regalia of office to his successor, who lost no time in performing his duties. Thus the long winter evenings passed in that lonely French fort, at the verge of an untamed continent.

With the coming of spring, the colonists commenced to build a mill, and to cultivate the little patches of ground they had cleared of the forest. They also built two barques, using pitch made by the gum of the fir. Well might the Indians look with astonishment at the ingenuity of these busy