

so that the Côte de Beaupré can lay claim to the first Art School and the first model-farm in America. The Quebec Seminary still keeps up this state of things—at least as far as agriculture is concerned. The place is known as “The Priests’ Farm,” and supplies the Seminary, being thoroughly worked and having much attention given to it. It is also a summer resort for the professors and pupils of the Seminary.

After the restoration of Canada to France by the Treaty of St. Germain-en-Laye, in 1632, this part of the little colony grew apace, so that by the time the seigniorship passed into Laval’s hands, from whom it came to its present owners—the Seminary—its population, notwithstanding its exposure to attack by the Iroquois, was greater than that of Quebec itself. From its situation it has been less vulnerable than many other districts to outside influences. The face of the country and the character of the people have yielded less to modern ideas, which, working quietly and imperceptibly, have left intact many of the antiquities, traditions and customs that have disappeared elsewhere within the last generation. Here you may find families living on the lands their forefathers took in feudal tenure from the first *seigneurs* of La Nouvelle France. What Ferland says is still to a great extent true: “In the *habitant* of the Côte de Beaupré you have the Norman peasant of the reign of Louis XIV., with his legends, his songs, his superstitions and his customs.” He is not so benighted as many people think he is, but here and there you will come across a genuine survival of the Old Régime, and may, perhaps, meet some gray-capoted, fur-capped, brown-visaged, shrivelled-up old man, whose language and ideas make you think a veritable Breton or Norman of the century before last has been weather-beaten and smoke-dried into perpetual preservation.

All the world over your fustic is conservative. The old gods lived long among the Italian villagers, though Rome was the centre of the new faith. Among the *habitants* of the Province of Quebec there yet exist a mode of life and cast of thought strangely in contrast with their surroundings. In the cities a rapid process of assimilation is going on. Quaint and foreign though Montreal, and especially Quebec, seem to the stranger at first sight, their interest is mainly historical and political. To understand the national life of Lower Canada, you must go among the *habitants*.

The word is peculiarly French-Canadian. The *paysan*, or peasant, never existed in



AN OLD HABITANT.