

Man, in such a condition, has no record but that of living memory. When that fails, tradition assumes her fabulous and precarious history; but, from the unstable nature of her constitution, she too must give way, and ultimately become involved in that obscurity which first conceived her. Hence the deep mist which overshadows the primary institution of nations and cities. We may indeed, by the aid of history, trace the foundation of the *Cecropia* of Athens or the *Capitol* of Rome; but, if we except the memorable origin of Constantinople, there is not a city of antiquity, the story of whose first outlines and formation can be told, with any degree of respect to the truth of real history. In modern times, especially in this new world, the case is, however, entirely different; and it will be a stigma which must attach itself to an enlightened age, if every historical vestige be not preserved, not only of every nation and city, but of every village that is reared up amongst us. In olden times the people were not sufficiently acquainted with the arts of life to enable them to do so. But in our day, there is scarcely a person who arrives at the years of discretion that is not capable of conveying to posterity some idea of the moral and artificial improvements which are going on around him. In the midst of such refined accomplishments let us not fall into the barbarous ignorance of the ancients. Let us neither deny ourselves the pleasure nor posterity the benefit of tracing, to the very first dawn of their existence, every province and institution regarding whose origin and progress we are in possession of any accurate information; and, if we cannot throw any thing new into the page of history, let us, at least, endeavour to preserve what has been already recorded, and multiply the sources of access to her no less amusing than instructive stores.

These observations have occurred to us as not an inapplicable introduction to the history of the city of MONTREAL—a city which may yet vie in commercial and political importance with any Metropolis in the whole continent of America.

Neither the English nor the French historians seem to be unanimous in their decision, relative to the time and manner in which CANADA was first discovered by European nations. Far less have they been hitherto capable of presenting us with any thing like an accurate detail of the progress which had been made in exploring the country immediately after the outlines of its geographical limits had been ascertained. But as an investigation into the failure of historians, or, the inaccuracies of navigators, can add little importance to our present historical sketch, we shall only so far trace the discovery of Canada as will be sufficient to preserve the line of connection between that interesting event and the first information which we can discover of the existence of such a place as Montreal. Canada seems, undoubtedly, to have been discovered by CABOT, the famous Italian adventurer, who sailed under a commission from Henry the VII. But though the English monarch did not think proper to make any use of this discovery, the French quickly attempted it; and we have an account of their fishing for cod on the Banks of Newfoundland, and along the sea coast of Canada, in the beginning of the sixteenth century. About the year 1506, one Denys, a Frenchman, drew a map of the Gulf, now better known by the name of St. Lawrence; and two years after, one Aübert, a ship-master of Dieppe, carried over to France some of the natives of Canada. As the new country, however, did not promise the same amazing quantities of gold and silver produced