

STYLE OF TRAVEL

—OF THE—

High French Officials at Quebec in Olden Times.



HE industry, patient and comprehensive research displayed by our French annalists, Garneau, Bibaud, Ferland, Faillon, has unquestionably left but little unsaid or unnoticed—albeit the manner of presenting facts may widely differ—on the old regime of Canada; and the glamour and rainbow tints, with which the historian Frs. Parkman has invested this remote period, seems to have rendered it instinct with life.

More than one circumstance of recent occurrence are of a nature to encourage the modern delver in the rich mine of colonial history to delve still deeper. In 1872, a Public Record Office was opened, an annex, as it were, of the Department of Agriculture, the best man in the whole Dominion of Canada, probably, Douglas Brymner, was selected as its head, specialists such as the Abbés Verreau and Tanguay, B. Sulte, Jos. Marmette were asked to co-operate; we all know their cordial and effective response.

It is now apparent to careful observers that the *lacuna*, hitherto sorely left with respect to reliable records for describing a later period—the English regime—is being rapidly filled in. In more than one promising essay, is apparent the beneficent influence of the new light—of wider horizons—opened out; there are many satisfactory indications, probably, no where more visible than in two recent histories of Canada, Mr. B. Sulte's and the more recent work of Wm Kingsford. F. R. S. C. Another healthy trait, worthy of notice, is the awakening of each province, since Confederation, to the sacred duty of garnering and preserving its own historic records, in which are revealed the struggles, material and intellectual progress of its inhabitants from their rude beginnings to the present day. I am more particularly reminded of this at the present time by the perusal of the annual report *annuaire* of *l'Institut Canadien* of Quebec for the year 1889.

Amidst other interesting matter, it contains summaries of no less than seventeen (*) hitherto unpublished *Mémoires*, compiled by a distinguished engineer officer sent out from France, Col. Franquet, who came to America, in 1750, as Chief Engineer of Fortifications, who had been charged

by the king of France with the duty of fortifying Louisbourg, in Cape Breton, which he did, though it had to succumb, in 1758, to the victorious arms of Wolfe, despite the heroic defense it made. Franquet landed at Louisbourg, in 1750; in 1751, he crossed over to Isle St. Jean (Prince Edward Island). In 1752, he extended his peregrinations to Quebec, Three-Rivers, Montreal, Lake St. Sacrement, and during his three years stay in Canada, he visited and reported on innumerable forts. It is some of the memoirs he wrote about this time, I purpose to examine and comment on. In 1754, Franquet returned to Louisbourg in company with the Chevalier de Dru-court to put in order the old works of defence and carry out the instructions of the French king as to new works. Franquet was even more than an experienced engineer officer; his memoirs exhibit him as possessed of literary attainments, he evidently was a close observer of men and things generally, though his timely reports to the king on existing abuses and needed reforms seem to have remained unheeded in those degenerate days, in which coming events were already, though dimly casting their lurid shadow before them.

New France in 1751 was administered by the Marquis Duquesne. Duquesne de Menneville, a captain in the Royal Navy, was a descendant of the famous admiral Duquesne, who had shed lustre on the reign of Louis XIV. He was brave and able, but a blight affected the colony: the profuse expenditure and in some cases the wholesale pilfering of some of its high officials. A burthen to France it was even in 1751, losing gradually its former prestige. Was the Marquis gifted with a species of second sight and when in 1754, he asked for his recall, could he even then detect on the wall faint tracings of an ominous hand pointing to its loss to France a few years later? Some are inclined to think so.

In 1754, however, there were yet but distant mutterings of the gathering storm and even the royal concubine would have shrunk from openly daring to rejoice at the possible loss of Canada to France.

The Marquis Duquesne, who had landed at Quebec in July 1851, was not long before setting earnestly to work in order to carry out his royal master's instructions concerning the measures to be taken to eject English traders from the valley of the Ohio. One of his first tasks was to order a general review of the regulars and militia available and to enforce discipline: the country could furnish 13,000 fighting men, it was found. The fol-

lowing year was spent in preparations for the coming campaign. In the spring of 1753, Capts. Morin and Peau were dispatched with men towards the seat of the threatened trouble, in accordance with plans matured the winter previous; this brings us to the 14th January 1753, when His Excellency started by land, of course, to make arrangements at Montreal for the king's service and Col. Franquet will be our cicerone. Franquet's M. S.S., translated in 1854 from the archives of the war office in Paris, was that year added to the collection of Canadian historical documents.

It remained for long years ignored—except to a few curious students of Canadian annals. In 1876, it was my good fortune to obtain for the first time access to these instructive memoirs. In 1889, the *Institut Canadien* of Quebec made a selection of their contents for publication in its *Annuaire*. Under date, 14th January 1753, Col. Franquet describes the trip by land, he was invited to take under the considerate charge of Intendant Bigot, from Quebec to Pointe-aux-Trembles, to escort the Commander-in-Chief, on his annual voyage to Montreal.

"Each year," says Franquet, "it is customary, nay necessary, that the General in the colony should go to Montreal in January, returning to Quebec in the ensuing month of August. Among other official business the following appear to be the principal duties which attract him there."

1st.—To select and name suitable officers to command in the king's posts in the upper country—*les pays d'en haut*.

2nd.—To regulate the number of soldiers required in each post.

3rd.—To limit the proportion of vehicles for their conveyance and the amount of provisions necessary for the route.

4th.—To provide each post with the arms and stores requisite for their defence and maintenance, for one year.

5th.—To deliver permits to traders, for leave to trade at these posts.

6th.—To fix the number of assistants required by the traders and by others for the king's service in order to be able each year to keep exact count of the number of persons leaving the colony.

7th.—To receive the delegates of Indian tribes, who each year visit Montreal to bring offerings to the king; to warn and advise them of what the French sovereign expects of them and to present these delegates with necklaces as tokens of their good faith.

There were several other important subjects which engaged the attention