

the beginning of June till the latter end of August. Many solemnities were observed, at which the governor assisted, and guards were placed to observe good order among such a concourse of different savage nations; all of whom were extremely fond of spirituous liquors, and when drunk committed great excesses. The English soon grew jealous of these fairs; and the branch of wealth which they created; and the colony they had founded at New-York, soon found means to divert the stream of this great circulation. Time having extinguished, or rather suspended, the national hostilities between the Indians, the English spread themselves over the country, and the savages flocked to them from all quarters. This nation had infinite advantages to give them the preference to their rivals, the French. Their voyages were carried on with greater facility; and consequently they could afford to undersell them. They were the only manufacturers of the coarse cloths that were most suitable to the savages. The beaver trade was free among them; whereas among the French it was, and ever has been, subject to the tyranny of monopoly. It was by this freedom and these prejudices, that they engrossed most of the trade that rendered Montreal so famous. By these various means the people of this city began to be a little more independent in their circumstances; and saw the propriety of clearing and cultivating the neighbouring fields, as well as pursuing the fur trade with the Indians. All these fields soon afforded a sufficient supply for the wants of their respective owners. There were few of them that did not yield maize, barley, flax, hemp, tobacco, pulse, and pot-herbs in great plenty, and excellent in their kind. Most of the inhabitants had a score of sheep, whose wool was very valuable to them, ten or a dozen milch cows, and five or six oxen for the plough. The cattle were small, but their flesh was excellent, and these people lived much better than the country people did in Europe—a feature in their history which we may safely assert has descended to our own day. With this kind of affluence they could afford to keep a great number of horses, which were not fine but fit for drudgery, and able, as they are at this day, to perform journies of amazing length upon the snow and ice. Such was the situation, at this time, not only of the inhabitants of Montreal, but of 83,000 French, dispersed or collected on the banks of the river Saint Lawrence.

A series of years of commercial prosperity and domestic quiet tended to ripen the manners of the inhabitants into characteristic and permanent habits. A countryman of their own,* who was no less distinguished as an historian and philosopher than he was an ornament to literature, has drawn an interesting but impartial picture of the manners of the French colonists of the period just under our observation. These, he observes, were not always answerable to the climate they inhabited. Those who lived in the country spent their winter in idleness; pensively sitting by the fire side. When the return of spring called them out to the indispensable labours of the field, they ploughed the ground superficially without ever manuring it, sowed it carelessly, and then returned to their former indolent manner of life till harvest time. As the people were too proud or too lazy to work by the day, every family was obliged to gather in their own crops; and nothing was to be seen of that sprightly joy,

* Abbe Raynal.