

the hospitality, the grace of manners so remarkable in the Canadians of old; hence their pleasure in meeting friends and in multiplying the occasions of entertaining one another. Winter therefore meant a series of friendly meetings, full of charm and cordiality and *joie de vivre*.

The pleasures of the table were especially attractive. What pantagruelic feasts were suppers in these happy days! Abundance made up for any deficiencies of cuisine, and, from what we know to-day of the old culinary art, we are bound to believe that there was nothing so appetizing as the golden turkey, fresh pork nicely roasted, pigs' feet and the chicken pies that so appealed to the palates of Quebecers of another day.

Thus the hospitality of olden times displayed itself in a very sumptuous manner; the housekeeper, called upon to do the honours of the house, covered the table with all sorts of dishes, and the table was hidden under a variety of large and small plates filled with all kinds of delicacies. De Gaspé tells us that the Canadians of old made it a rule that the table should be almost as copiously covered at the end of the meal as when the guests sat down to it.

The writer had occasion in his youth to be present at one of these wondrous feasts—it was a wedding breakfast—where the guests rivalled each other in having a good time. He can still see them with their beaming faces; all drinking merrily, round a table overloaded with food, and listening to the best singer, whose charm was irresistible when, rising from his chair and turning towards the master of the house, he would ring out, amidst the general hilarity, this refrain:

*Bonhomme, bonhomme,
Tu n'es pas maître dans ta maison
Quand nous y sommes.*

The pleasant life of the good old times ran its course chiefly in the old parishes along the St Lawrence and Richelieu. The valley of the latter, with its beautiful fields and rich soil, could be likened to a vast garden producing in abundance all the necessities of life. Sir Georges É. Cartier once remarked that his father exported