

JOSEPH MARMETTE

Many years ago, as was my wont, I called upon my friend Oscar Dunn, in whose boon companionship I found so much pleasure during my short sojourn in Quebec. I was scarcely seated when a visitor entered, a man still young in years, brown of complexion, low-sized, but erect and well-built. His eyes struck me at once—he wore glasses, which seemed less an aid to their defective sight than a shade to temper their brilliancy. They bespoke a kind, ingenuous nature, coupled with intellectual power and a bright imagination.

“Mr. Marmette,” said Mr. Dunn to me. I acknowledged the introduction with much pleasure. I had already read the *Chevalier de Mornac* and *François de Bienville*, and knew their author before my poor deceased host gave me his name.

Joseph Marmette was born on the 23rd October, 1844, at Saint-Thomas-de-Montmagny, issued of the marriage of Dr. J. Marmette with Miss Éliza Taché, daughter of Sir E. P. Taché. He studied classics in the Seminary of Quebec, and followed a law course at Laval University for three years. Those best acquainted with his character were surprised to see him ply so long a vocation so dry and distasteful, and when at last he threw aside Pothier for a position in the Provincial Treasury, it was only what everybody expected. The change, however, was like abandoning Charybdis for Scylla; but in Canada, as elsewhere, talent is seldom remunerated as it deserves.

In 1882, through the influence of a friend, he was appointed to the more congenial post of agent of the Dominion Government at Paris. His stay there was of short duration; he left for France in May, 1882, and returned home in November, 1883. Of little account was the promising welcome accorded him in the French metropolis, or the practical, intelligent labours that he performed there—his career of usefulness was cut short without previous warning. Yet, thanks