

gentleman who proposed one of the resolutions. There was an inflexible integrity, uncommon energy and decision, which always inspire confidence and respect—a remarkable evenness in his whole demeanor of benevolence and firmness—a peculiarly commanding and soldier-like appearance—a generous, frank, and manly bearing, and, above all, an entire devotion to his country. In short, I believe I shall best convey my own impression when I say, it would have required much more courage to refuse to follow General Brock than to go with him wherever he would lead.”

In a despatch from Earl Bathurst, Secretary of State for the Colonies to Sir George Prevost, the following tribute of respect is paid by the British Government to the memory of General Brock:—“His Royal Highness the Prince Regent is fully aware of the severe loss which His Majesty’s service has experienced in the death of Major-General Sir Isaac Brock. That would have been sufficient to have clouded a victory of much greater importance. His Majesty has lost in him, not only an able and meritorious officer, but one who, in the exercise of his functions of Provincial Lieutenant-Governor of the Province, displayed qualities admirably adapted to dismay the disloyal, to reconcile the wavering, and to animate the great mass of the inhabitants against successive attempts of the enemy to invade the Province, in the last of which he fell; too prodigal of that life of which his eminent services had taught us to understand the value.”—*Leader*.

IV. Papers on Physical Geography.

1. THE NORTH-WEST.—FIRST EXPEDITION TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

Among the new matter which M. Garneau has added to his *Histoire du Canada*,* in the third edition which he has just published, is an account of the discovery of the Rocky Mountains. As the expedition has a direct bearing on the present position we shall recite the leading facts connected with it. In the first quarter of the last century the French formed a project of visiting the Pacific ocean overland; the feat having already been performed by a savage named Yson, and perhaps by a great many others. About the year 1718, the French ministry had charged M. de Vandreuil to send M. de la Morandière on an expedition to discover this sea; provided he should receive favorable news from M. de Lanoue, who had gone to establish a post at Kamanestigoya, on the north of Lake Superior. Finally M. de Beauharnois determined to set seriously about the discovery of the Pacific ocean. It was not supposed that this would be a very difficult enterprise; for the notion which then obtained was that the continent became narrow towards the north. M. Varennes de la Verendrye was selected for this task. He had served in the French army, in New England, in 1704, and afterwards in Newfoundland. M. de la Verendrye was advised by the Governor, at Quebec, to follow the Assiniboine instead of taking the country of the Sioux. With the ignorance of the inclination of the surface of the country which then prevailed, it was supposed that a river would be found near Lake Winnipeg that would conduct directly to the ocean which it was desired to reach.

The Russians were the rivals of the French in this discovery. Peter the great, before his death, while at Paris in 1717, promised the Academy of Sciences that he would take steps to ascertain the distance between Asia and America. In accordance with the orders contained in his last testament, his successors sent Vitus Behring and Thschirikoff, on the promised discovery; and as they, advancing by sea from the west, touched the American continent, French officers were exploring the interior and wending their way towards the west. But there was this difference in the position of the two; while the Russians were sustained by their Government, the French officers were expected to live on the good wishes of the Canadian Governor and the barren sympathies of the mother country.

M. de Beauharnois examined, with an engineer, a map of the country obtained from an Indian named Ochagach, whom M. de la Verendrye had chosen for his guide. The engineer, M. Chaussegros de Lery, came to the conclusion that, as New France was traversed by two great rivers, of which the sources were in the interior, the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi, one of which ran eastward and the other southward, there would be found at the west another great river; that there could not be 700 or 800 leagues of territory without it. This conclusion seemed the more certain, since it tallied with accounts given by the Indians.

At Montreal, M. de la Verendrye associated himself with some persons from whom he received advances of merchandize, both for trading and for his own personal necessities; and then left for Lake Superior with Father Messenger, a missionary priest. His orders were to take possession of any countries he might discover; and to

examine with attention the advantages offered by a communication between Canada, Louisiana, and the supposed ocean. But while the French Government was willing to profit by the undertaking, it refused to render him any assistance. When he entered into unknown regions, where civilized man had never before set foot, he soon discovered that in proportion as he advanced from the French posts did trade become difficult; and that the more attention he paid to trafficking with the Indians the less was he likely to arrive at the object of his search. Thus by the aid of his four sons and his nephew, M. de la Jemerais, every one of whom was devoted to the enterprise with a generosity equal to his disinterestedness, he was destined never too see that unknown sea, of which he was in search. Twelve years of trouble and of sacrifices brought him only the glory of discovering the country between the Rocky Mountains on the West, and Lake Winnipeg on the East. M. de la Verendrye took the route of Lake Superior and Fort Kamanestigoya, which was constructed by Lieutenant Robutel de la Lanoue, about the year 1717. He passed, with his companions, Lac de la Pluie, on which they built Fort St. Peter; by lac des Bois, on which, next year, they erected Fort St. Charles; by the River Winnipeg, on which, in 1734, they constructed Fort Maurepas. The French, says M. Garneau, took possession of the country, in establishing posts for their protection, and the advancement of their fur trade. Continuing their course, they traversed the lac Dauphin and the lac des Cygnes; they fell in with the river des Biches and ascended to the fork of the Saskatchewan or Poskviac. They constructed fort Dauphin, on lac Manitoba, and the fort de la Reine, on the same lake; fort Bourbon, on river des Biches, at the head of Lake Winnipeg; fort Rouge at the junction of the Assiniboine with the Red River. They continued their course, now verging to the south and now to the north, without finding the ocean of which they were in search. In 1732, one of the sons of M. de la Verendrye, with his party, which consisted of twenty and the Jesuit Anneau, were all massacred, in an island in the Lake of the Woods by the Sioux. Five Canadian voyageurs discovered their remains, some days afterwards.

In 1738, the rest of the French explorers who had escaped the ferocity of the Indians, reached the Upper Missouri; which they ascended as far as the point since known as Yellow Stone, of which the source is in lac des Sablettes, at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. “The eldest son of M. de la Verendrye and the chevalier, his brother,” says M. Garneau, found themselves at length, on the 1st Jan., 1742, 60 years before the travels of Lewis and Clarke, before these mountains, in a journey which lasted from the 29th April, 1743, to the 2nd July in the following year, and in which they passed by the village of Beaux-Hommies, and visited the Poyas, the nation of the Little Foxes, the Bowman and the Serpent nation.”

After the death of M. de la Verendrye, the elder—who, as is often the lot of those who render great services to their country, had been pursued with unjust calumnies and suffered to accumulate a large debt, 40,000 livres, in the service of the country, but who received a captaincy and was decorated with the cross of St. Louis—his sons desired to continue the discoveries; but Bigot, who was Intendant of Canada, formed a company, of which he himself formed part, and which, carrying the fur trade to the foot of the Rocky Mountains, made fortunes for themselves, while they saddled the State with the expense of an expedition which in reality rendered it no service, unless it were the erection of Fort la Jonquière, at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, in 1752.

The facts contained in this recital have a direct bearing upon the question of the North West territories. It is notorious that the Hudson’s Bay Company did not penetrate into the country west of Lake Superior till after 1774; though the French had traversed it and erected numerous forts in it forty years previously. We are thus enabled to fix the dates and balance the pretensions of these two rivals in the fur trade, the French and the English. If the claim of the Hudson’s Bay Company to the Red River Country is to rest upon discovery and priority of settlement, it must fall to the ground. But, in point of fact, the Company rest their claim to this portion of the territory in their possession upon the terms of their charter, under which they set up a pretence of ownership to all lands of which the rivers flow in Hudson’s Bay. But it is obvious that according to the principles of international law, England could not convey by charter a territory of which it never had possession. “The earth,” observes Vattel, “was given by God to mankind in general. But their multiplication made it impossible for the land to be possessed by all in common. It therefore became necessary for nations to settle in particular places, and appropriate to themselves certain portions of the earth and cultivate them. Hence came rights of property and dominion over land. The country which a nation inhabits is the settlement of the nation, and it as an exclusive and peculiar right over it. This right comprehends two things: 1st, The domain, (*dominium*), by virtue of which the nation alone may use this country for the supply of its necessities, may dispose of it

* Now being reprinted in an English dress, by Mr. John Lovell, Montreal.