



FOR THE LAND WE LIVE IN.

Memoirs of P. A. De Gaspé.

The Haberville Manor—Its Old Laird.

"The period through which M. de Gaspé has lived [1786-1871] has been so eventful, and the public occurrences of his earlier years, were so brimful of romantic interest that he could hardly fail to be interesting, while pouring out the budget of his recollections, even to listeners on this side of the Atlantic." —*London Review*, 29 Oct., 1864.

IV.

CASTLE ST. LOUIS REMINISCENCES.

IN a previous chapter, mention was made of the light cast on the social life of the representative of royalty, at the *Chateau St. Louis*, and of the entertainments afforded the guests admitted within its charming circles.

Judged from modern standard, vice-regal hospitality seems to have been neither plenteous, nor magnificent; not even when proud old Count de Frontenac was lording it in the heyday of his splendor—on the historic old rocks. Of the gluttonous repasts—*festins a manger tout*, of those unsatisfiable cormorants, the native Indians, we have most circumstantial records; not so of the entertainments of the early representatives of the *Grand Monarque*, in the citadel of French power in America.

'Tis a pity no court journal should have existed to tell us all about the *ton*, as well, as of the order of precedence, at the Governor's mahagony.

I can recall, when in 1880, was mooted the question of what might have been, two centuries ago, at official dinners, at the Castle St. Louis, the social status of the most illustrious colonist of the period, Charles Lemoyne,—created a Baron by Louis XIV., it was found impossible to discover any record establishing the place assigned to him by virtue of his patent of nobility. Thus has remained in abeyance the ticklish question whether Charles Colmore Grant, the lineal descendant of the Baron de Longueuil, so graciously recognized as a

Baron by Her Majesty the Queen, ought to take precedence on state occasions of Canadian knights, &c.

The "period of high living, fast women and gambling" generally styled in Canadian annals—the Bigot regime—is better known to us in this respect. Franquet and other contemporary chroniclers have left lively accounts of social customs, without forgetting those fashionable routs and charming *petits soupers* of which the *Intendance* was the chief theatre before the conquest. There yet however remained several decades undescribed. M. de Gaspé has bridged over a large portion of the *lacuna*.

Whilst the *Memoirs* bring out in relief several important historical incidents, they also furnish a number of light gossiping pages, and familiar anecdotes showing the inner life and domestic ways of those at the top of the social ladder.

M de Gaspé has a happy manner of setting forth some of those airy nothings. I append an example in point; though, translated in a different idiom, it necessarily loses much of its freshness and charm.

One regrets that the old Laird of St. Jean Port-Joly has not furnished more reminiscences of the protracted existence vouchsafed to him and comprising the administration of so many English Governors: Haldimand, Lord Dorchester, General Prescott, Sir J. Cope Sherbrooke, the Duke of Richmond, Earl of Dalhousie, Lords Aylmer and Gosford, Lord Durham, Sir John Colborne, Lord Bagot, Earl Cathcart, Lord Elgin, Sir Edmund W. Head, Lord Monck.

The following anecdotes relate a serious trouble between one of our most beloved administrators, Lord Dorchester, surnamed in 1775, the "Saviour of Canada" and the clerk of the weather. His Excellency had retained the services of an estimable old captain of militia (Captain Gouin, of Ste. Anne de la Perade) to drive him one bitter winter day. "I soon noticed, says Captain Gouin, that His Excellency's nose had become perfectly white from the intense cold. The Governor's nose was a marvellous one

as to size; I may be allowed to venture so far without disrespect to his memory. His Lordship, a thorough gentleman, as courteous to a peasant as he would have been to a king, spoke French like one of us, and was quite communicative.

"Your Excellency," says I, "pardon the liberty I take, but your nose is frozen to a crisp."

"What then is to be done?" replied his Lordship, raising his hand to his unfortunate nose.

"Well! Hum! Do you see, *mon General*," retorted Captain Gouin, "so far, my experience has been limited to dealing with Canadian noses; an English nose might possibly require a different treatment."

"What would you do to thaw a Canadian nose?" asked Lord Dorchester.

"A Canadian nose, your Excellency, is inured to hardship, and we treat it accordingly."

"Just suppose," retorted the saviour of Canada, "that you are prescribing for a Canadian and not for an English nose."

"Very well, your Excellency, but an other difficulty may arise. Englishmen are not all privileged to own a Governor's nose, and therefore proper respect and consideration is due—"

"D— your eyes!" ejaculated the agonizing Governor, "due respect and consideration be hanged! Don't you see, my unlucky nose will soon be dropping off!"

"That remedy is inexpensive and close at hand," retorted the scared militia officer. "I have plenty under my cariole. The snow!"

GENERAL ROBERT PRESCOTT, LT.-GOVERNOR AT QUEBEC, 1796.

Occasionally, the dignitaries representing Britain on our shores seem, in early times, to have playfully laid aside official reserve, mingling with the French colonists, through curiosity or possibly to judge by themselves what the latter thought of their new English masters.

Some of these familiar interviews with King George's new subjects, were not without a spice of fun.

"General Prescott, says M. de Gaspé, was much liked by the French-Canadians, and not unfrequently, sought other light than what he received from his *entourage*, much, in the end, to the disgust of the latter. I knew him in my youth: he was a diminutive old man—simple in his manners and dressed in winter as if he longed to imitate that famous personage of the *Arabian Nights*, Sultan Aaroon.

A Beauport farmer, in 1796, con-