

the sort now adverted to. One's own personal experience or participation in a series of events may aid in correcting misstatements on certain points: but, to be of substantial and permanent value, a written record should be made at the time of or soon after their occurrence. To delay making that record until, perhaps, years have elapsed, or to leave it for a future generation to supply, is to weaken the character of such evidence, and cause it to assume more or less that of mere rumour.

In offering these last observations, we have had in view more particularly the difficulties which must encompass any attempts at present to get at the correct history of events which have transpired in this country during the past fifty or sixty years, until at least all the available written and printed records are looked up, collected and arranged, and their evidence sifted, as well as weighed in conjunction with the conflicting testimony of eye-witnesses and participators still living or recently deceased. If, however, we limit our ideas of the nature of tradition as consisting of oral testimony transmitted from father to son, or from individuals of one generation to those of another, we have numerous instances in the history of Canada, as well as that of other countries, shewing its uncertain character when not supported by written records. Believing this to be a point of some moment in connection with our leading subject, one or two examples are cited.

We have a fair instance in English History of the account to which traditional evidence might have been turned if it were in all cases good for much. It is that of the Parr family. Thomas Parr was born in 1483, and lived till 1635, attaining to the prodigious age of 152 years. He had a son who died at 113, a grandson who lived to be 110, and a great-grandson who died on September 21st, 1757, aged 124 years. The period between the birth of Thomas Parr and the death of his great-grandson, Robert, comprehended the space of 274 years. But old Parr, when he was brought to London in 1635, to be presented to King Charles I., although then in good health, and in full possession of his mental faculties, seems to have had very little to impart respecting the events which had occurred in the course of his protracted life; nor are we informed that any of his long-lived descendants ever contributed anything to the existing stock of knowledge. Thomas, however, seems to have been quite uneducated and illiterate; and if the same were the case with his descendants down to Robert, the great-grandson, we might, perhaps, be allowed to infer that defective intelligence was a cause of the loss of so fair an opportunity of illustrating the nature and value of oral tradition. Nor do we find in Canadian History that the stock of knowledge was substantially increased by the aged Iroquois woman who is reported to have come on a visit to Quebec about the year 1712, when she was 138 years old. This venerable person is said to have afforded, by her visit, immense gratification to the inmates of the Ursuline convent, who beheld in her one who was of mature age when Champlain ruled in Canada, and who, they judged, must have received from eye-witnesses belonging to her own tribe accounts of the first arrival of their roundress, Madame de la Pelrie, as well as of