

those of a corrupted speech, but of one that has outlived the changes of many centuries. A friend of mine once overheard in one sentence three marked Norman peculiarities of Canadian French: *'inqu'un p'tit brin à c'heure*. That the prevailing language of the province of Quebec, while tinged with Norman peculiarities, is, nevertheless, not Norman but French, or the product of Ile de France, may be seen by a comparison of it with the literature of the Channel Islands, and with the early literature of Normandy. Of these islands, the most important in this connection is Guernsey; for Alderney, lying nearest to England, has become most subject to English influences on its speech; and Jersey, lying nearest to France, has become more subject to the influences of that country, while Guernsey has retained the Norman dialect the purest of all. I shall first quote from a work written in 1871 by Denys Corbet, and entitled: *Les Fécilles de la Fougère*. The first lines of the Dedication are as follows:

"V'là l'esprit, l'oeur, et la vouaix  
D'yun qui rime au fond du bouais.

Few persons would confound the pronunciation of *vo-ah-ee* for *voix*, *yun* for *un*, and *boo-ah-ee* for *bois*, with the sounds heard in Montreal, Quebec, or St. Hyacinthe.

The following stanza is from a poem entitled *L'Élai*, a Bourguignon expression for *L'été*:

"Savoids l'art de vivre bien,  
Et d'être toujours content!  
C'est de n'être gêné de rien  
Et d'prendre tout tai qui vient:

"Si fait calme, ou s'il y'a du vent,  
Si fait caud, ou si fait fred,  
Priaiz l'bonan Guiu, r'merciaiz l'en  
Et vous serais, ma té, d'qué."

Who ever hears in Canada *terjous* for *toujours*, *ch'est* for *c'est*, *généur* for *général*, *caud* for *chaud*, *fé* for *foi*, or *d'qué* for *de quoi*? The word *fred*, with the final *d* pronounced, reminds us of the French-Canadian *frette*, and *l'bonan Guiu* recalls the familiar *le bon Dieu*; but who ever hears *taï* for *tranquille*? *Tai* is doubtless from the vulgar Latin *tacere* for *taçere*, and this again contracted into *taïr*, then changed into *tair*, from the participle of which the adjective and the adverb *tait*, spelled in Guernsey *taï*, would arise. The following lines from the poem *Es Tortevélais* contain some sounds that would puzzle a French-Canadian:

"—A reformair Guernesi,  
En maquière ecclésiastique,  
(Mon Dou, coum chu long mot stique  
Dans la garguette) et vol' part,  
Quiq (tohik) biau jour."

On looking over these poems, I find many familiar expressions, often with a slight difference of pronunciation, such as *et pis*, *à c'heure*, *hain*, *fé*, and *brin*; but, on the whole, the difference between the insular Norman and the French of Canada is quite marked.

About the end of the 14th, or the beginning of the 15th century, three centuries after the conquest of Normandy by Ile de France, a fuller, Olivier Basselin, wrote, in Normandy, some drinking songs entitled *Vaux-de-Vire*, from the valley of the little river Vire. One of these songs is called *Les Vaux*. The first stanza will show that the French of Normandy had, after two hundred years from the final separation of the Channel Islands from France, become very much what the French of Canada is to-day, but quite different from the old Norman of those islands:

"Si j'ay un amy quand je boy,  
Je voudray qu'il beust avec moy  
Du meilleur vin que l'on peut boire;  
Plus grand bien on ne me peut faire  
Que de bon vin en m'abreuvant."

We have already seen that the peculiarity of pronunciation indicated by the rhyming of *boire* and *faire* marked the speech even of the highest classes of Paris in the 17th century. That a new pronunciation had, at the end of the 17th century, already supplanted that of Louis XIV may be seen from the following sentence taken from the "Caractères" of La Bruyère, first published in 1688:—"L'air de cour est contagieux: il se prend à V— comme l'accent normand à Rouen ou à Falaise." It is not the French of Canada, then, that has changed, or become degenerate. It is the French of Paris which, moulded by the growing influence of the lower orders, has abandoned its old pronunciation for one farther removed than that of Canada from its source in the Merovingian Latin and the Latin of Caesar's Roman soldiery. The sounds formerly prevalent were no longer heard in Versailles, but had retained their hold upon the inhabitants of Rouen and Falaise. Philologically viewed, then, the French of Canada is purer than that of Paris. That the Canadian French is not a corruption of the French of Paris may be seen from separate expressions, as well as from pronunciation. I choose but one. Canadians are condemned for the interchange of *chaque* and *chacun*, the former being an adjective and the latter a pronoun, and so not properly interchangeable. A French-Canadian often says, for instance, "Ces bœufs pésent mille livres *chaque*" for "mille livres *chacun*." But an examination of old documents reveals the fact that the distinction between *chaque* and *chacun* is comparatively a novelty. Littré says, "C'est une faute de dire: ces chapeaux ont coûté vingt francs *chaque*; il faut, vingt francs *chacun*." The fault here condemned, then, is not peculiar to Canada, and could not have been taken thence to France, and is, therefore, an old expression. Littré gives no quotations to prove the incorrectness of it older than the 16th cen-

tury. With reference to *chacun*, however, he gives quotations as old as the 12th century to prove that it was then used as *chaque* is now. From the Book of Psalms, p. 178, he quotes the following: "Chesquins huem (homme) est mençungiers;" and, from another authority, he gives "entres ses bras il prist chacun baron," and "Chascuns paiens en baissa le menton." Even as late as the 17th century we find La Fontaine saying, (Book II., Fab. 20, p. 99), doubtless after antique fashion:—

"..... Comment comprendre  
Qu'aussitôt que chacune sœur  
Ne possèdera plus sa part héréditaire,  
Il lui faudra payer sa mère!"

In the "Edit de mai, 1619," of the "Edits, Ordonnances Royaux, Déclarations, et Arrêts du Conseil d'Etat du Roi, concernant le Canada," Louis XIV, speaking of the collection of *dizmes*, says: "Il sera au choix de chacun curé de les lever par ses mains, &c." If the French Canadian idiom is ungrammatical, it is, therefore, rather from changes that have taken place in the opinions of the grammarians of France than from corruption in the French of Canada.

The scientific value of the French language in Canada is not confined to its merely historical relations, but is seen in its illustrations and confirmation of leading philological principles. It is well known that the French language has a peculiar value in philology from the fact that nearly all its changes, from the Latin out of which it sprang, are preserved in documentary form. To some degree, the ends attained by consulting the archives of France are possible from the living pronunciation, idioms, and expressions of Canadian parishes and towns. In the preservation of ancient forms in the living speech of to-day, and in the light thrown by them on various questions of interest in philology, it is not wanting in analogy to the modern Greek.

The laws of linguistic growth may, perhaps, be grouped under the heads of inherent tendencies and outward circumstances.

One of the fundamental principles of linguistic science is that, while "nature is wasteful of time," she "is sparing of effort." The principle is embodied in what is called the law of ease, or of least exertion, and occurs as one phase of inherent tendency. In common conversation expressions are shortened, giving a certain rapidity to the speech. This is proverbially common amongst French-Canadians. An expression very commonly heard is *'enque*, as in *'inqu'un p'tit brin for rien qu'un peu*. *Viens ici* becomes in the mouth of almost every mother who calls her child, *'iens cite* (pronounced *yin cite*). For *je crois que c'est ici*, we hear *Je crois (cré) qu'c'est cite* (*saité cite*). For an explanation of the pronunciation of the adverb *ici*, with the sound of *t* at the end of it, we must go back to the 12th century. At that time, the Latin *ecce iste*, after having passed through the intermediate form *eciste*, had attained the form *icist*, which became in old French *cest*, and finally, the modern demonstrative adjective *cet*. The form *icist* became, also, *cist*, as now pronounced in Canada. (See Brachet, Hist. F. Gram, p. 113, and Etym. F. Dict. Art. Ce). If any one objects to this derivation by saying that the word *cist* in old French was an adjective, while the Canadian word is an adverb, I must remind him of the adage *omnis pars orationis migrat in adverbium*. Besides, Littré, in his "Dictionnaire de la Langue Française," gives the two forms *eci* and *ecit* for the adverb *ici*, as used in the old Province of Berri. The derivation of this being the same as that of the demonstrative, the evidence seems to prove that the adjective was subsequently used as an adverb, and that the Canadian word, instead of being a corruption, by the addition in some inexplicable way of a *t*, is but one of many old forms handed down from the earliest times.

Another instance of the operation of the law of ease is found in the expression, *j'ai té l'qu'ri* for *j'ai été le querir*, which, in modern French, would be represented by *je suis allé*, or *je viens de le chercher*. Here, it must be noticed, from the elision of the middle vowel of *querir*, that the form used by the people must be the older form of the verb, which is found without any accent on the *e*, as in old French, nothing is more marked than the retention, even in shortened words, of the original accentuation. The absence of the French accent on *querir*, as well as the termination *ir*, arose from a previous misplacement of the Latin accent of *querere* from the first to the second syllable, thus producing a shortening of the first Latin syllable. We have thus another evidence that Canadian French is not a corruption, but a form singularly attached to its primitive associations.

Other instances of the operation of this law are the use of *aneler* for *agueler*, *bandelière* for *bandoulière*, *lessie* for *lessive*, *ligneu* for *ligneuil*, *tréfe* for *trêfle*, *que don* for *écoute donc*, and *aller à la drive* for *aller à la dérive*.

Another source of changes in language which finds illustration in the French of Canada is international intercourse. This comes under the law of circumstances. Languages become strangely mixed in their vocabulary, whether their grammatical structure remains permanent or not; and the language of French Canada is no exception. The conquest of Canada by England has left, and is leaving, its impress on the vocabulary of the French. To a very small degree, the French influences the English, too. I have received letters from teachers in Quebec, in which the French custom of not capitalizing adjectives of nation, when they do not point out persons, was adopted in English. The same practice is visible in printed official documents. The vicinity of the United States is not without its in-

fluence on the French. It produces a peculiar effect to hear such expressions as *la sope*, *le sink*, *le coffe*, *la mop*, *le washboard*, *la sauce-pan*, *la dust-pan*, *le boil-eur*, *mouover*, *cleaner*, *mopper*, *la hose*, *le main-track*, *le baggage-car*, *les passengers*, *le steam-bble*, *mettez mon coat*, and *le steamer*.

On two pages of a little dictionary of French-Canadian barbarisms and solecisms, I counted ten anglicisms in 68 words, and on another page of 30 words there are six anglicisms. These appear in the field of manufactures, law and legislation, mental processes and religion, commerce and social life. Under the head of manufactures are *bogué*, *cap*, both for the head and the gun, *cracker*, *drill* for *couteil*, *facterie*, *pumps*, *servir* *apprentissage*, for *faire*, *ec.*, *stage* and *sulky*. Under law and legislation may be put *aspersions*, for *diffamations*, *bill* for *loi*, *faire des appropriations* for *des octrois*, *police-man* and *rappel d'une loi* for *révocation*, *ec.* Under mental processes and religion occur *être consistant* for *conséquent*, and *entretenir des doutes* for *avoir* or *concevoir*, *ec.*, and *délivrer un discours* for *prononcer*, *ec.* Under commerce may be placed *artichaut* de Jérusalem for *topinambour*, *faire application* d'une charge for *faire la demande*, *ec.*, *anticiper un succès* for *espérer*, *ec.*, *barlé* for *orge*, *cheque* for *bon*, and many others. The adoption of *bar*, *brandé*, *gin*, *peppermint*, *sherry*, and *bully*, is very significant. Faucher de St. Maurice in his work with the peculiarly Canadian and musical title *A la Brunante*, page 252, notices also *enshalouer* and *ascertainés*.

While treating of international intercourse, it may not be uninteresting to trace the date of the advent of the common words of French Canada in the term *gazette* (from the Italian *gazetta*) the popular word for *journal*. In it, we trace Canadian terms to the day when Italian influence transformed the manners, thoughts and language of France. In some country parts, however, this word has been abandoned for *papier*, which corresponds better to the English word "paper." This leads to an examination of the influence of education, or the want of it, on the language of French Canada.

The Protestant portion of the population of the Province of Quebec is 171,666 or slightly over 14 per cent. of the whole, the majority of the remainder being French. The non-readers over twenty years of age in 1871 were 191,862, or over 35 per cent. of the population of the province, and over 64 per cent. of the non-readers of the four provinces which originally formed the Dominion, these being 299,575. The non-writers were 244,731, or over 45 per cent. of the population of the province, and over 59 per cent. of the non-writers of the Dominion, these being 412,142. The population under 20 years of age in the Province of Quebec in 1871, was 657,612. Those under 6 years of age were 216,185. The minors over six were, consequently, 441,427. Those between 6 and 16 were 310,875. By the Report of Education for 1872-73, p. XXIV, there were 223,014 scholars at school, or 33 per cent. only of the juvenile population, leaving 434,598 of the youth of the province who were receiving no scholastic instruction. If school age is reckoned from 6 to 16, and if those between 16 and 20 are supposed to be engaged in some lucrative employment, there would still be 87,861 children of school age receiving no instruction. These, of course, are principally French. From the exhibit made in Philadelphia, we may learn the character of the education given to those at school, and the prospects for the growth of an intelligent people amongst the French speaking population of Canada. Of 490 newspapers published in the Dominion, Quebec boasts of 115, while Ontario has 175. Of the 115, the French papers number 22. Thus, while the Protestant 14 per cent. support 93 newspapers, the French 86 per cent. support but 22. Amongst the literary class of the French Canadians, which is larger than that of Ontario, and which, in certain branches, as classics and mathematics, has received a good education, there circulates a mass of native literature not generally believed to exist, and of a very superior character. A visit to the shelves of the M.M. Rolland will convince anyone of the truth of this remark. In their catalogue, six pages are filled with the titles of works purely French Canadian, many of them being of great merit and polish. Yet the masses of the French who do read receive for their intellectual food, either works of devotion or novels of the Eugène Sue and the Alexandre Dumas stamp, with works generally of a light and amusing character.

The low condition of popular education is seen in the language itself. It is not difficult to tell when words in popular use are gathered from reading or from hearing. The use of the eye tends to accuracy in the pronunciation, while that of the ear only is subject to many influences tending to produce changes in the forms of words. Syllables are added or dropped, and words with similar sounds but different meanings are confounded. Thus, we have *acculer* for *éculer*, *agrayer* for *agréer*, *s'agripper* for *s'agripper*, *amancher* for *emmancher*, *arêche* for *arête*, *assavoir* for *savoir*, *bieler* for *bigler*, *caneçon* for *caleçon*, *carnas* for *cadenas*, *castonade* for *cassonade*, *chassepareille* for *salsepareille*, &c. We have *parafafe* for *balafre*, a gash in the face, while its own meaning is bad writing, an unfinished stroke; and we find *vent derrière* used for *vent arrière*. So we have *prendre un autre rein* de vent for *rumb de vent*, *rein*, a kidney, being used for *rumb*, a rumb line, in an expression which means to sail on another angle with the meridian. We have, also, *ruelle de veau* for *rouelle de veau*, a round slice of veal, *ruelle* being a lane. In a similar way,

find *cousin remattre de germain*, a perfectly nonsensical expression for *cousin remué de germain*, a cousin removed from german, or the nearest relationship. We have, likewise, the expression *affranchir une nation sauvage*, for *civiliser*, &c., and *affranchir un arbre* for *greffer*, &c. Another word is *lêlé* for *taie* in *taie d'oreiller*, a pillow-case. Such expressions, even apart from the census returns, reveal the meagre share of that education which trains the eye to distinguish between the correct and the incorrect in the forms of words.

Under the head of education may be placed the very numerous marine terms which changed habits have applied to operations on land, and which must have been first employed on ship-board, or on the shores where the first French immigrants settled, and carried on their business.

An instance is given in *prendre un autre rein de vent*, to sail on another tack. So, when one enters a vehicle, he is said to *embarquer*, if he never saw a vessel or the sea; and when he dismounts from his horse, he is to *débarquer*. The French Canadian is often said, not to *gâter son habit*, but to *abîmer* it, or swallow it up in an abyss. The term *caler*, too, which was mentioned before, as being used for the clearing out, or lowering, of a ditch, properly means lowering a sail of a vessel.

Under the head of education, as preserving certain forms of expression, may be mentioned the influence of hereditary superstition and rites. I will notice only two of these, *loup-garou* and *guignolé*. *Garou* is from the mediæval Latin *gerulphus*, and this again from the old German *werewulf*, the man wolf. The ancient Gauls believed that at certain seasons, some men became wolves, and roamed at night. By the term *loup-garou*, the French-Canadian of to-day understands a man who, after faithfully serving the devil for seven years, without turning his heart to God, has power to become a roaming wolf, spreading terror amid the simple peasantry. The Gallic superstition had not abandoned Canada twenty-four years ago, at which time I saw one of these men of terror.

For the origin of the term *guignolé*, I am indebted to M. le Mettayer-Masselin de Guichinville. It refers to a custom of singing from door to door, and sometimes collecting alms, on the night of December 31st. M. le Mettayer traces the word to *qui de l'an neuf*, the mistletoe of the new year, which has been corrupted to *guignolé*. At the very sound of it, we are carried back to the times of Druidic worship in the forests of Gaul; and we wonder at the tenacity of old forms of life and speech amongst people who have no knowledge of the origin of the practices they celebrate.

The length of this paper forbids the discussion of the bearing of Canadian French on these problems of physical necessity, of the nature and limits of freedom of will in man, and of the probable future influence of the French language on the destinies of Quebec and the Dominion, which are of interest to us as thinkers and patriots. If thought desirable, these topics may, some day, be made the basis of another paper.

JAMES ROY.

Montreal, Oct. 23, 1877.

### ECHOES FROM LONDON.

Charing Cross hotel is an averagely large hotel as such buildings go. Yet it is being enlarged considerably. A separate block of buildings is being erected on a site which has been cleared between Villiers-street and Buckingham-street. It is intended to have the new buildings ready by the time fixed for the opening of the French International Exhibition. The additional buildings will be for bedrooms exclusively, and be approached by an ornamental bridge carried across Villiers-street, at an elevation of thirty-five feet.

MANY eminent men have declined the dignity of knighthood because they could not afford to pay the necessary fee, or thought the title not worth its cost; and now two towns—Truro and St. Ann's—that have been raised to the rank of cities, in consequence of having been made the seats of new bishoprics, have had to pay something like £100 each in fees for patents, etc. Surely it is not right that men or towns that the Queen honours should be thus subjected to a pecuniary mulct. Royal favours should, like mercy, bless the giver and the receiver.

In 1873, Olrik, a member of the Danish Royal Academy, exhibited at Burlington House a portrait of the Princess of Wales, which was universally admired. The Princess had herself taken a great interest in the work of her countryman, and had granted him fourteen sittings, of which, it must be said, he made the most. When it was finished she declared it to be the best yet done of her. It was determined to engrave it, and M. Ballin has undertaken the task. He also has done his work so well that the Princess desired a *fac simile* of her autograph to be attached to every copy of the work.

### ARTISTIC.

It is reported that Mme. Thiers is making arrangements to buy the house at Marseilles in which her husband was born, and that it is her intention to install a museum therein, composed of a portion of the late ex-President's art collection.

At the forthcoming winter exhibition of the Grosvenor Gallery, it has been decided to include a large number of drawings and studies by the old masters, as well as water-colour drawings by deceased painters of the English school. Her Majesty has consented to lend a portion of the splendid collection from Windsor.