

those days was the fountain of honour; or on the recommendation of some of the minions of the imbecile monarch. As Frenchmen, they were ever ready to fight, but often, we notice them the slaves of inordinate pleasure.

Quebec as well as Montreal, they strived hard to make, according to Parkman's expression, "a sparkling fragment of the reign of Louis XV. dropped into the American wilderness."

Quebec, in fact, as to gambling, soon got to be the Monte Carlo of the continent. High play and immorality reigned supreme amidst public misery and ghastly famine. Whilst the unfortunate people were dying in the streets for want of bread, leading officials, civil and military, were crowding at the faro tables or nightly gorging themselves in banquets, which the rising sun alone brought to a close. Even the high-spirited and studious Montcalm was an abettor of gambling. De Vaudreuil thus reproves him: "Que n'arrête-t-il lui-même le jeu effroyable auquel se livrent les officiers de son armée!" The Marquis apparently overlooked this vice. The result was disastrous to the morale of his army. Impecunious subalterns had to borrow and borrow heavily from the rich *roturiers* of trade, at Quebec and at Montreal, to keep up in expenditure with Bigot's clique of wealthy parasites and public robbers.

The "Memoirs sur le Canada, 1749-60," whilst showing up the rogueries and immorality of the enriched, low-born Lovelaces and Lotharios who paid court to Bigot and to his *chère amie*, do not spare the Chevalier de Lévis, who took to France his mistress, the wife of Penissault, one of Bigot's confederates. It seems her pretty face won her favour, even with the great state Minister, Choiseul. The church tried in vain to put a stop to these public scandals. Bishop Pontbriand was not slow in raising a note of warning. Abbé Casgrain tells how the good pastor put forth a *mandement* so energetic, on the 18th April, 1759, that Montcalm took exception to its terms and reproached the Bishop for having unsparingly condemned "the indecent masquerades" of the preceding winter, and for asserting that "a house of prostitution was established near the ramparts of Quebec."

Was the Intendant here aimed at?

If the lives of the leaders were not pure, what could have been that of the French *troupiers*? • Female virtue—love of country, disinterestedness, true manliness, were evidently relegated to a back seat in this steeple-chase of riot, robbery and wantonness. True, there was yet in the colony a party—not a very numerous, nor strong one,—*le parti des Honnêtes Gens*: de Vaudreuil, de Lévy, Tache, La Corne, de Beaujeu, de Longueuil, and some other men of note belonged to it.

Even de Bougainville, who is credited with making several pretty speeches—Bougainville, the learned Fellow of a London society of *savants*—Bougainville, the mathematician, destined later on to immortalize his name as a navigator, was nothing but a reckless gambler "*un des plus forcénés joueurs*." * "Though he affected to be a rigorist," says the Abbé, "his daily life resembled that of his friend Bigot."

We are reminded to be brief.

Abbé Casgrain's work† completes some data, probably left out intentionally by Frs. Parkman, as to Montcalm's too great intimacy with certain fascinating ladies, in Parloir St., Quebec. In a letter the general wrote to Bourlamaque, whom he had left in Quebec,‡ he says: "I am glad you sometimes speak of me to the three ladies in the Rue du Parloir, and I am flattered by their remembrance, especially by that of one of them, in whom I find, at certain moments, too much wit and too many charms for my tranquility." More than once in his correspondence, allusion is made to these charmers, who were nigh making him for a time forget the absent Marquise, Condiac and his olive trees in Provence.

The Abbé thus describes Parloir Street—a narrow thoroughfare which skirts the very wall of the Ursulines Chapel, where the gallant rival of Wolfe has slumbered for 132 years in the grave scooped out by an English shell: "Little Parloir Street was one of the chief centres, where (in 1758-59) the *beau monde* of Quebec assembled; two salons were in special request: that of Madame de la Naudière and that of Madame de Beaubassin; both ladies were famed for their wit and beauty. Montcalm was so taken up with these salons that in his correspondence he went to the trouble of locating the exact spot which each house occupied; one, says he, stood at the corner of the street facing the Ursuline Convent; the other, at the corner of Parloir and St. Louis Street. Madame de la Naudière, née Geneviève de Boishebert, was a daughter of the Seigneur of Rivière Ouelle, and Madame Hertel de Beaubassin, née Catherine Jarret de Vercherès, was a daughter of the Seigneur of Vercherès. Their husbands held commissions as officers in the Canadian militia. It was also in Parloir Street that Madame Péan, often referred to in Montcalm's letters, held her brilliant court."

The charm of Madame de Beaubassin's conversation seems to have particularly captivated Montcalm, as he frequented her *salon* the most of the three. "At the Intendance, or at Madame Péan's house, he managed to forget his exile and troubles; at Madame de la Naudière's, he was interested in what he saw, but at Madame de Beaubassin's he was under a spell." Notice is also taken of a tall young officer of the name of Boishebert, from Acadia; no favourite of Montcalm, and who seems to have divided with him the

sunshine of Madame de Beaubassin's smile. This juvenile rival he advises Lévis to send back to his native Acadia. Of course, when the gorgeously-attired, ruffled, scented, red-haired, magnificent Intendant, Bigot, dropped in at Parloir Street for a chat, ordinary callers were momentarily hushed to silence, amidst the profuse attentions showered by laquais on the wealthy patron, who, frequently, was accompanied by Major and Madame Péan. The Abbé notices among other habitués, "the Longueuils, St. Ours, de la Naudière, Villiers, Dr. Arnoux and his wife and several officers of the land forces; Bourlamaque, grave and reserved, Bougainville, a Jansenist in opinions and caustic in his remarks, occasionally unpleasant; Roquelaure, full of whims."

In short, adds the Abbé, the higher circles of Canadian society at Quebec presented a sorry spectacle; the example set by arrivals from France, demoralized society; the disorders of war and the license of the soldiery in a great measure helped to consummate its ruin.

"One witnessed a state of things that could not last: disorder from the top to the bottom of the social ladder. The end evidently was not far off; a dreadful storm was brewing overhead. Would it engulf everything? None could tell. People averted their faces; dared not look into the future; tried to drown care in dissipation. 'Twas a mad race for pleasure. Society, blinded, was revelling on a volcano."

Let us turn to less sombre vistas. Montcalm had one true and able friend in Lévis, the most level head in the colony. More than once, as revealed in the correspondence, Lévis acted as peacemaker between the impetuous Montcalm and the weak, vacillating, but obstinate, de Vaudreuil, the Governor-General of Canada and commander-in-chief of the forces. This duality of command led to endless trouble, and bitter recriminations between him and Montcalm. De Lévis' accommodating ideas on matrimony are amusing, as set forth in a letter he addressed to a powerful lady friend in France, Madame la Maréchale de Mirepoix. We translate:—

"* With respect to the marriage that the Chevalier de Mesnon has proposed to you for me, you know I never had much inclination for matrimony. I would dread marrying some one you might not like, and that would imbitter the remainder of my life. If you can select for me a wife, I will take her readily, provided she meets with your approval. So you can reply as you think proper to the Chevalier de Mesnon, whose friendship and remembrance I will ever prize. Should his selection not please you and you should come across another person to your fancy, you can arrange as you like. I will honour any arrangement you may make. This is all I have to say on this subject. Rest assured I wish I could find a mate as attached to you as I am."

"We are likely to be vigorously attacked and will fight to the death."

After hearing this candid declaration of this Platonic Romeo, one is led to regret that the French match-maker, Madame la Maréchale de Mirepoix, did not send the Chevalier a brand new French wife from Paris.

It might possibly have deterred the gallant son of Mars from carrying away to France the low-born, but handsome, Madame Penissault, the daughter of a Montreal trader and the mistress of Major Péan, "qui se dedommageait," say the Memoirs, "sur les femmes de ses subordonnés." The Pompadour regime evidently was not limited to France. Its close on the Heights of Abraham was, in more ways than one, beneficial to Canada.

Quebec, 1892.

J. M. LEMOINE.

PARIS LETTER.

THE *Figaro* is to be complimented, but above all encouraged, for its practical utilization of the plebiscite idea, to ascertain from its readers their opinion upon some burning question, or prominent actuality. The innovation of the leading French journal has never been more serviceably applied than when it popped the question to several of the leading men of imperial Germany on the proposition of bartering Tonkin and Madagascar against the retrocession of Alsace. It was well known that Germany would not accept the two white elephants even as a present—*timeo Danaos*, etc.; and as for Madagascar, that is not exactly French—yet. It is questionable even if Germany would bite at the proposition were the offer a slice of Algeria or a French West-Indian colony. Judges who do not confine their view to the surface of events know that the quarrel between France and Germany is one for European supremacy, of which Alsace remains the outward and visible sign.

The German replies, very polite and uniformly serious, are in the *Wacht am Rhein* spirit. France is told many hard and plain truths, naturally to be expected from historic Vaterlandism. Now it is precisely in publishing these, the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, that *Figaro* displays an exceptional courage for French journalism, by its large circulation compelling the reading of unpalatable matter. Over-sensitiveness is the cardinal failing in the French character. A reluctance—amounting to abhorrence—to read what does not flatter its pride, pander to its likings, and minister to its ideal aims, dominates Gallic patriotism, and blunts the virility and protecting prudence of its judgment. These remarks do not apply to the French who have

travelled or who have associated with free speakers and independent thinkers, that know there are other big cities in the world besides Paris, and that the universe is not comprised between the Café Tortoni and the Grand Hotel.

A few specimen replies—*ab uno disce omnes*: the Speaker of the German Parliament refers the editor of the *Figaro* to the treaty of Frankfurt, of May, 1871, where France guarantees Alsace to Germany, as long as grass grows and water runs, that as the sword won Flanders, Burgundy, and Savoy for France, so it has secured Alsace for Germany. Professor Brentano recalls that Louis XIV., when in full peace with Germany, wrested Alsace from her, and that iniquity made Strasburg, till 1870, the high road for the invasion of Germany by the French. In another generation Alsace, he adds, will be re-Germanized by education, immigration and emigration, while France has never been able to extinguish the German tongue in Alsace during her 223 years of occupation. No one regards the proposed "swap of territory" as serious; all would desire to live on good terms with France—but Alsace must remain German. The *Figaro* might organize a Paul Pry plebiscite among the French holders of Egyptian bonds, say, of the fellaheen, to ascertain what is their opinion on the occupation of the Nile Valley by the British?

Pastor McAll is a name respected in France wherever known, and venerated in Paris through successful mission work. At Montmartre, the principal scene of this clergyman's effective and humble life labours: he has left his mark by establishing practical Christianity; he has founded 135 Conference Halls in France, of which forty are situated in Paris, in addition to Sunday schools and dispensaries; the amount of funds annually collected by him is 450,000 frs., and every centime brings forth its hundredfold of good. The Rev. Mr. McAll has just inaugurated a floating Mission Hall, destined for canal and river navigation in France. It is specially constructed, and will accommodate 150 "hearers of the Word." The arrangements for lighting and ventilation are very ingenious. The ship is in command of Captain Piru, an Irishman, who lives on board with his wife. Formerly this venerable looking captain paddled his own canoe across the Atlantic, then took his vessel to pieces, and fitted them together to make up into a cart.

The *Alliance Française* has held its annual meeting, and has for aim, to uphold the purity, that is to say, the lucidity of the French tongue, as well as to stimulate its propagation. The name of the society is anything but illustrative of clearness. The best means to propagate a tongue is to augment the number of tongues that speak it: now the population of France being decadent, its language must give way to that spoken by such a race as the Anglo-Saxon. It is said that the genius of France is due to her wines and her language; it is best not to pry into the former virtue, as the municipal laboratory could unfold sad tales. Journalism is blamed for the production of neologisms; but names, words, are only the expression of things, and the interpretation of their fitness is the outcome of their practical utility. Even Molière would hardly insist on Americans inviting the *précieuses*. Why ought moderns not be allowed to coin their own words, and give them currency, to represent a *multum in parvo* actuality? The words that most clearly represent our opinions and wants and cut short circumlocutions are what our realistic age exacts. Prince de Metternich is reported to have excluded all persons from his chateau who dabbled with an "ism." But who made the prince a ruler and a judge in philological jurisprudence? Have the right word in the right place, with ideas clearly conceived, and your language will be lucid, pure and comprehensible, whether it be French, Volapuk, or what Disraeli called the "American language."

The profits of the Monaco gambling tables during the last season were £723,000; goody goody people have only to subscribe sufficient capital to yield that yearly interest, and they can buy up the vice monopoly.

A discussion is taking place respecting the birth of puffism in France; the dryasdusts unfortunately confound puffs, with advertisements. The latter originated with Théophraste, in 1631, in his *Gazette*, to-day the *Gazette de France*. The puff is said to have been created in 1826 by an apothecary, Lepère, who eulogized a pomatum for skin diseases. After all it was only a more vigorous blowing of the advertisement trombone. Puff, as meaning the editorial eulogium of wares, or of persons, and that is duly paid for, is both a science and a fine art in France. In ingenuity, such puffism would deceive the very elect. But no one condemns the practice, but laugh at it, enjoy the pious fraud, if skilfully done.

It is singular that in France where there are so many learned women, and so many that relatively figure in public life, that so few succeed as journalists proper, when newspapers would be so happy to accept their contributions. Only two ladies have made their mark: Madame Adam, the foundress and editress of the *Nouvelle Revue*, and the best pupil of the Third Republic. For a score of years she has been writing down Bismarck, and advocating the Franco-Russian alliance—and scored successes; Madame Séverine has been nurtured upon Hugo sentimentalism; she screeches for sympathy for all misfortunes; aids Padelenski to escape from France; implores pity for the murderer Anastay; demands tears and francs for the victims of mining accidents, and for foodless and shelterless poverty everywhere. She "sings the 'Song of the Shirt,'" and all journals publish alike her dirges and her

* "Guerre du Canada," vol. II., pp. 13 and 14.

† "Guerre du Canada," pp. 337 and 338.

‡ Parkman's "Montcalm and Wolfe," vol. I., pp. 452-5.

* "Guerre du Canada." Casgrain. Vol. I., pp. 344-5.