

Here is "The Mourning Bride" in leather brown,  
With Ovid's verses on the title page ;  
You bought it yesterday for half a crown,  
The stall-man grinned behind you I'll engage.

A century unopened on the shelf,  
Almeria's role is noted, who shall say  
But that Bracegirdle conned these lines herself,  
Spilling her wine upon the paper gray.

Methinks I catch the odour of civet  
Out of the smirched and eaten pages steal ;  
I see methinks that lovely woman yet,  
Poring above them in her dishabille.

"No more a princess but in statu quo,"  
Tears stain the rouge upon her cheek, you see ;  
She whose sweet smile met ours an hour ago  
In secret lives her real tragedy.

Who through these leaves will somewhat subtly look  
Sees much beside the man of letters' care :  
A pale-faced actress stares back from the book—  
The author's getting dressed to see Voltaire.  
EZRA HURLBURT STAFFORD.

### OUR ORIGINALS.—III.

(From the French of B. Sulte, F.R.S.C.)

I repeat it, he is ignorant of the history of Canada completely ; he speaks like a blind man of colours ; his lively prose is truthful enough when he describes what he has seen ; upon other matters he simply talks nonsense.

The young women sent to the Antilles and to the Mississippi suffered greatly. Those for the Antilles found themselves rejected and reviled by the planters ; those for the Mississippi had the lot of the unfortunate Cavelier de la Salle, the leader of the enterprise ; they perished of misery. Some few of these latter reached France eventually.

The emigrations to Canada were otherwise organized, God be praised ! It is nothing wonderful that the result should be different.

Is, however, the letter of La Hontan the only writing of its kind ? Yes. Writers came later who repeated the statements in question. Repeated, let us well understand, repeated like parrots, adding nothing to their importance, particularly when account is taken of the constantly increasing number of documents at the first hand that are being discovered, and which completely upset the invention of La Hontan, for it is an invention, a jest of a buffoon.

In the course of this article I shall speak of the authors of letters and papers, who, after La Hontan, have called in question the purity of Canadian origin ; it is proper to forewarn the reader that these new-comers belong, not to the period of 1663-72, which is that of the girls, but to that included between 1697 and 1730, that is to say, the period of the despatching of men to Canada. La Hontan, then, is the only person who sought to throw aspersions upon the character of those persons chosen by the Canadian committee in concert with the French committee, for the peopling of Canada (1663-72)—committees which, it is known, were formed under the best auspices, obtained a complete success, and did not cease operations short of eight or nine years, at which time the king thought proper to stop the emigration, saying that Canada ought by that time to have become able to

look after herself. Colbert would have preferred to continue that which was so well begun, but the king refused.

Only the other day, in reading *Sentences et Jugements* of the Supreme Council of Quebec, which are printed by order of the Provincial Government, I came upon the resolutions and measures taken by the Executive of Canada on the subject of the selection and treatment of the girls and women brought from France, and accused later by La Hontan. There is also among the manuscript correspondence of the Governors of this period (preserved in Paris, and copies thereof at Ottawa) a crowd of explanations relating to it. Nothing could be more paternal, more Christian, more worthy of respect than the precautions of our administrators throughout the whole business. When one has followed the history of the time, and read the documents before mentioned, one is completely stunned on coming to the letter of La Hontan.

Twenty-five or thirty years after the departure of this officer, there was played in Paris a little piece by Le Sage (the author of *Gil Blas*) entitled *Les Mariages au Canada*. (The Canadian Marriages.) As it always happens, the second workman added to the faults of the first. This time, not satisfied with repeating the absurdities of La Hontan, the author inserted some of his own. He set people conversing who never saw each other, for the reason that certain of them were dead before the others were born.

In this silly production a newly-married pair left Quebec for the estate or holding that had been assigned them, but these brave lovers are made to cross the Mississippi before reaching their lot, a short journey of a few miles. And they are clothed in silk and covered with lace to undertake the promenade ; they have neither axe nor shovel, nor anything necessary for people opening up new land ; they also talk seriously of living a poem, of renewing an earthly paradise, etc.

But to return to my point of departure showing that, for the justification of seven or eight repeaters of phrases who have spoken incidentally a disrespectful word of the girls and women sent to Canada under the administration of Colbert, there is but one source, La Hontan.

Such as accept the dictum of this officer, have certainly never unravelled the tales or inaccuracies which so often spoil his account ; and I may add that to believe the assertions of La Hontan upon the point we are here discussing, one must never have read the manuscripts nor printed works which deal with the history of Canada. The text of La Hontan retailed in the United States and in France among people who do not know the first word of our past, has been taken seriously and held as authoritative.

Those who have not seen the large literature upon the history of Canada imagine that we are but a set of barbarians who permit every sort of assertion touching our past. They have read, here and there, a few sheets of the history of certain colonies in the Indies or the Antilles, which recall the sad story of the blunders and abuses of the earlier administrations, and think they are justified in applying the same to Canada. It is an example of the gross ignorance which mars the work of even the most famous. Michelet belongs to this class. He has written without knowledge and with a confidence that is at least surprising. See Volume XV of his history, chapter 8,

where he hits the truth in saying that notorious women have had a bad influence on colonization. In fact, wherever they have not taken women used to field labour to go to the colonies to cultivate the fields, there has been no success, all has gone wrong, misery and debauch have spoiled all.

But let it not come to our ears that they place such doings in Canada, for they will have to reckon with those they thus malign. We who know to the last detail how our country was peopled, have the right, the duty, and the authority to characterize according as they deserve, those injudicious writers who display an ignorance at once so complete and so unpleasant. Their great reputation will not save them ; on this issue even Michelet is but a poor authority.

It would be well if they would send over a man from France to consult merely the five hundred volumes upon the history of Canada that I have in my own library ! Afterwards we would visit my friends who possess twice as many books upon the same subject as I do. Then we would go and see two hundred thousand pages of manuscript, perhaps three hundred thousand, all of which are living witnesses of what took place formerly among us. Beyond that the Abbe Cyprien Tanguay, with his *Dictionnaire genealogique de toutes familles Canadiennes*, has given us three hundred thousand notes. There is a long list of books on the history of the old parishes giving the origin of the meanest families and the historical records of the smallest bit of land. You shall not be able to find even the breadth of a finger-nail on which to place conjecture ; the ground is entirely covered by incontestable facts.

It is by means of the original documents that we can explain each point, that we can speak of each individual. This is unique in the world. Our poets never cease making allusion to it ; our historians cannot conceive that anyone doubts it ; our journalists only, and writers at a distance, find it a hook whereupon to hang a doubtful word ; a proof that they have never studied the subject.

We must now say a few words upon the prejudice against us in the United States.

It seems to be accepted among our neighbors that the Canadian *voyageurs*, and particularly the *coureurs de bois* were not of the Cross of St. Louis. The term used to designate them says more than a long epic ; it is *oullaws*, that is to say, escaped convicts. There is only another step to take in order to affirm that Canada sheltered a crowd of evil wretches escaped from the galleys, or something like it, driven from France, tolerated in Canada, and threading their way westward at every possible chance. I have met this belief in American books, and among circles of readers who are otherwise very well affected towards us. Now is the time to attack it.

The Company of the Hundred Associates had the administration of Canadian affairs for thirty-seven years, when they made over their rights to the West India Company in 1664. Up to that time the men employed as fur-traders were recruited partly from among our *habitants*, partly from France, whither a certain number of these latter always returned after three or four years' service.

This commerce had been almost invariably confined to the borders of Upper Canada by the wars of the Iroquois ; the result was that few or none of the Canadians or Frenchmen took up their abode save in the