

difficulty in understanding one of our *habitants* than an educated American the dialects of the country people of the United States. Of the peculiar use of words he instances—"Il mouille" for "Il pleut"; "butin" for "effets"; "il me tanne" for "il m'impatiente," and "Embarquez à cheval" instead of "Montez à cheval." These and other expressions are of historic interest, as they point back to a state of society when property was often really booty, and when canoes were more abundant than beasts of burden.

Of course, Dr. Bender has something to say of the wondrous increase of the French-Canadian people. Two prominent officials of the Province of Quebec are, he tells us, twenty-sixth children, and so of families, entitled to profit by the law that allots a hundred acres of land to each parent of twelve living children. He tells a story of a farmer who, on the birth of his twenty-sixth child, took it to the *curé* as part of the *dîmes*—a twenty-sixth part of all natural productions being the legal portion of the Church. The reverend father took the gift in good part, only stipulating that its mother should be its provider till it was able to eat. After that he would attend to its education. Mr. H. Lamothe, in his *Excursion au Canada et à la Rivière Rouge du Nord*, mentions this gift to the *curé* of the twenty-sixth child as a usual custom, and, as an instance of it, says that one of the leading officials of this province, an ex-premier, received his education in that way. The story is repeated by M. Antoine Chalamet in *Les Français au Canada*. Both authors give the name of the Church's child.

#### A CASE IN POINT.

When an Englishman counsels his Government to give up Gibraltar—no mere radical, but one who aspires to the rank of a diplomatic adviser—we may reasonably begin to think that changes are at hand. English Heligoland, we are told, was a long continued injustice, a standing eyesore and insult, first to Denmark, then to Germany. It never was of any use to Great Britain. It was taken from Denmark by force, without any plea that a statesman, who cared for equity, could defend. Even when Hanover was under an English sovereign, the occupation of the islet by England was an anomaly—serving no purpose but to hurt Teutonic susceptibilities. But if there was a certain appearance of fitness in England holding it, while the King of Hanover was King of England, there was no excuse whatever after the Queen's accession, and still less, if possible, after the effacement of Hanover—unless, indeed, to punish Prussia for that act of injustice. Thus argues Mr. Collet, in the *Diplomatic Fly-Sheet*. He gives Lord Salisbury credit for getting rid of a *damna hereditas*—an heirloom fraught with danger, and for the adroitness with which he discharged the task. There was always the position in a tone which England could not fail to resent, and then even to imagine a war between two great nations for such a plot of ground is enough to inspire horror. While Heligoland remained English, Russia would be always watching for the chance of making it a pretext for a quarrel—a quarrel which would advance her own ends most unmistakably.

But Mr. Collet goes farther. He directs our attention to Gibraltar, and suggests a parallel and a contrast. Gibraltar costs a good deal to keep up as a British fortress. Yet it is of no more military value to England than Heligoland was. As a source of annoyance to a proud and patriotic people, it is much worse. Heligoland was at least in the ocean. But Gibraltar is actually part of the Spanish mainland. The British flag waving from those heights is a perennial slight to a people with whom we are at peace and supposed to be on terms of friendship. "Let Lord Salisbury," says Mr. Collet, "take heart of grace and restore Gibraltar to Spain." We have already spoken of Malta, which stands in pretty much the same relation to Italy as Heligoland did to Germany.

The inference is obvious in that case also. England's duty there is alike clear. But what of the Channel Islands? Is England to give them up too? It is true that they have been English for many centuries, but the evidence of the map is all for France. Mr. Collet thinks that by continuing this gracious policy of surrender, England would be setting an example to civilization. He is especially interested in the lesson which the giving up of Heligoland, and (if his advice be taken) of Gibraltar would teach to Germany in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine. But his logic halts there; for it was just on the ground that Elsass and Lothringen were old German possessions that the policy of 1870 was enforced. Nevertheless, the restoration of those provinces would conciliate French sentiment as no other boon that Germany could offer would do. England, however, has done very well, for a beginning. It is some other power's turn now. Mr. Collet might have given a thought to his unhappy fellow-countrymen in Newfoundland in this connection. In another page of the same issue of *Diplomatic Fly-Sheets*, he insists with much point and force on Newfoundland's rights. The question is not one, he says, for arbitration or mediation. The Newfoundlanders are the only community vitally interested in the question, and justice demands that all foreign rights on that island must be abrogated. That is hardly the tone that is likely to prevail with France, but undoubtedly there could not be a finer opportunity of following up the example recently set by England than that of Newfoundland. By relaxing the hold that treaties, framed under circumstances wholly different from those that prevail to-day, give her over the "French shore," she would deserve the respect of civilization and win the lasting gratitude of the people of Newfoundland. As far as Lord Salisbury's policy tends to bring about such an act of justice, it merits the approval of every British colonist, and, especially, of every Canadian. Unfortunately, France, instead of looking upon the surrender of Heligoland to Germany as an act to be admired, is rather disposed to consider it part of a policy of hostility to herself.

#### THE OLD NOR'-WESTERS.

We have already made some reference to the second series of the Hon. Mr. Masson's admirable record of the North-West Company and its leading members. A little more than twelve months ago we gave an outline of the treasured lore of the first series, with its masterly introductory sketch. Therein the author sets before the reader a concise, and yet comprehensive, narrative of the progress of trade, adventure and exploration under the Old Régime and in the early years of British rule. Even before the Conquest, something had been done both from Hudson Bay and by the Great Lakes towards the opening of Western Canada. The Sieur de la Verendrye and his sons had penetrated far into the prairie region—crossing nearly the whole of the great steppes. Some years after New France had been settled under English auspices, traders from the Old Country—Frobishers, McGillivrays, McTavishes, Frasers, McKenzies and others, whose names have long become household words—set out on the route towards the "Southern" ocean and journeyed far into the recesses of the sub-arctic wilderness. Montreal was the chief emporium of the fur-traders, and many reminiscences of their days of power are found in the writings of the early travellers through North America. Mr. Masson has in his first volume portrayed the characters and described the adventures of those hardy fortune-seekers—Henry and Cadotte, the Frobisher brothers, Umfreville, Pangman, Quesnel, Peter Pond, Grant, Leroux and the McKenzies. He tells how the greatest of this last name made his way, through every obstacle, across the continent, till the sight of the mighty Pacific rewarded his patience and fortitude. He gives animated pictures of the jealousies and quarrels of the rival companies. He sheds light on the schism that gave birth to the vigorous but short-lived "X. Y.," and explains how, on

McTavish's death in 1804, the way was cleared for reunion. But the healing of that breach only made more bitter the struggle between the Hudson Bay Company and the Nor'-Westers. The Astoria episode was prophetic, for, in spite of its failure, it created in the minds of our neighbours that longing to possess the lower Columbia, which ultimately deprived the fur-kings and, through them, the Dominion, of a precious portion of its western domain. Lord Selkirk's self-imposed mission—a forecast of what has taken place in the present generation—and the unhappy collisions that at last made the North-West too small for both companies closes the record.

In the first volume there are, besides the *Esquisse Historique*, a collection of documents in the form of journals, letters or narratives of the utmost interest. The Hon. Roderick MacKenzie (cousin of Sir Alexander), from whom Mr. Masson inherited a whole series of papers; Mr. W. F. Wentzell, a Norwegian in the company's service; Mr. Simon Fraser, M. F. V. Malhiot, Mr. John McDonnell, Mr. F. A. Larocque and Mr. Charles MacKenzie were the writers of these manuscripts.

In the second series, these valuable contemporary documents are continued. Mr. John McDonald, late of Garth, Gray's Creek, Glangarry, who was in the North-West from 1791 till 1816, wrote for his son, Mr. de Bellefeuille McDonald, while in his 89th year, a series of "Autobiographical Notes," covering the period of his service, and these interesting reminiscences are, by permission of the writer's grandson, Mr. de Lery McDonald, included in this second series. The letters of Mr. George Keith to the Hon. Roderick MacKenzie, cover the ten years from 1807 to 1817. They give much valuable information regarding the far northern departments of Mackenzie River and Great Bear Lake. The account of Lake Superior, written by Mr. John Johnston, father-in-law of Schoolcraft, the historian of the Indians, deals with explorations conducted from 1792 to 1807. A valuable contribution, which throws a lurid light on the war of the Nor'-Westers against the Hudson Bay Company and Lord Selkirk, is Mr. Samuel H. Wilcocke's "Narrative of Circumstances attending the death of the late Benjamin Frobisher, Esq., a partner of the North-West Company." The scenes here depicted mark the last agony in the conflict, as the companies were amalgamated two years later. Mr. Duncan Cameron, writing in 1804-1805, sketches the "customs, manners and way of living of the natives in the barren country about Nepigon;" Mr. Peter Grant, about the same time, describes the Sauteux Indians. Mr. James MacKenzie discloses the policy of the company in its dealings with the tribes, and also adds to our knowledge of the relations between the rival corporations. The record comprises some deplorable facts, but will be extremely valuable to the historian. From the same pen we have an account of a region nearer home—the King's Posts—and a "Journal of a canoe jaunt through the King's Domains" in the year 1808. This is of special interest for the light it throws on the early history and condition of the Saguenay and Lake St. John region. The narrative abounds in data of exceptional value, the writer's observations extending as far north as Lake Mistassini, on which body of water both companies had small posts. The vast dimensions of the lake were then, as until recently, an article of popular belief, which Mr. MacKenzie confirms. The "North-West Agreements," which, as the editor informs us, were the only constitution of the company, bearing date 1802 and 1804, respectively, are given in full, with the names of the signers. These documents, less known but for Canadians, not less interesting than the charter of the Hudson Bay Company, close the second series. The annotations help the reader very materially. Indeed, Mr. Masson has clearly made his task a labour of love. The publishers, too (Messrs. A. Coté & Co., Quebec), have evidently taken a patriotic pride in doing worthily their share of the work. We hope in future issues to give our readers some examples of its value and interest.