

VISIONS OF OLD QUEBEC

Odd, Excentric and Whimsical Characters



O most people the events of bygone periods are subjects of great interest. They find satisfaction and pleasure in wandering back over the ways the departed souls have travelled; they wish to hear of their mingled warp and woof of character, their quality of temperament, their magnetic personalities, their martial and adventurous deeds and acts. These are the things that generally arouse, absorb and fascinate the living. Strangely enough the majority of folks find a greater interest, more poignancy, more vivid significance in the foibles and naughtinesses and perversities of their fellow-beings than in their virtues, perfections, and home-like qualities!

From the present chronicler's past there arises a shifting panorama of varied scenes and incidents, and a host of ghostly memories, in which appear many specimens of humanity, including the peculiar, morbid and fantastic. In these retrospective glances, or visions he beholds also welcome births, and mournful rustles of deaths, sad partings and harrowing farewells from loved ones. But the writer's intention to-day is to confine himself to visual-

izing more especially some of the queer folks and singular characters who figured in the life of Quebec, during his boyhood and early years of manhood. This he does mainly for the benefit of the younger generation. Many of the voices which he heard during these periods of his existence resound still in his ears, and not a few of the old faces peer upon him from the land of spirits. Some of the people appear as in a dream, like ships in the night when one is crossing the ocean, while others are almost complete entities, with their peculiarities and oddities, and their acts and deeds plainly writ.

No one, now-a-days, challenges the fact that we are all more or less peculiar or bizarre, with varying crotchets, kinks or wheels, in our mental make up. The queerest and oddest ones we meet are people of like passions, of similar feelings and failings as ourselves. Are we not children of one family with a line of demarcation between the sane and insane, not often easy to define? We have but one particular absurdity in common, death ends the comedy or tragedy in all cases. We may well exclaim with Abraham Lincoln who was particularly fond of William Knox's memorable lines: