

Short Notes on Canadian History.

FRANCIS I. AND CANADA.

Spain, England and Portugal had already taken possession of sections of the new World, before France was stirred into the activity that resulted in the discovery and colonization of Canada. Under the patronage of Spain, Christopher Columbus—in 1492—discovered America. In 1496 Henry III., of England, fitted out an expedition for a British merchant, John Cabot, who, with his son Sebastian, was the first European to set foot on the main land of this continent. In 1500, a Portuguese navigator—Gaspard Cortereal—visited Newfoundland and entered the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The Breton and Norman fishermen frequented the coast of Newfoundland as early as 1504, and for nearly twenty years plied their trade without exciting any special interest in France.

Fully ten years before Jacques Cartier set sail for the New World, Francis I., King of France, had conceived the idea of participating in the discoveries that other powers were making. About 1513, having heard endless stories of the wealth that Spain, England and Portugal were reaping in the almost unknown regions beyond the great Atlantic, the French monarch resolved to keep pace with them in this new line of national development as well as every other one. One day, when told by a scientist how rapidly the great continent, so recently discovered, was being seized upon by the monarchs of rival kingdoms, Francis exclaimed: "I would like to see the clause in Adam's will which gives them the right to divide the New World among themselves?"

The following year the monarch commissioned a Florentine navigator—Jean Verazzani—to explore the northern portion of the continent, and to make a faithful report to him.

That same year Verazzani sailed across the ocean and visited the eastern coast of America, from the 30th degree of north latitude to Newfoundland. He claimed all that vast region, in the name of the French King, and made a report to Francis I. of all he had seen and found. That report was couched in terms calculated to stir into a flame the embers of desire that smouldered in the royal breast. However, it was only in 1534, ten years later, that, in spite of the European conflicts then raging, Francis decided to establish a colony in what was already called New France. It was then that Jacques Cartier was commissioned to carry the standards of Christianity and of France into this land of promise. Although it is generally accepted that Cartier was the first to discover Canada, still we see that he had been preceded by Verazzani. In succeeding issues we will deal briefly with a few of the most important events that mark the period of Cartier's three voyages of discovery. For the present we simply wish to draw atten-

tion to the fact that the French monarch had conceived the idea of establishing a colony in New France long before the date of Canada's discovery.

There is now no doubt as to the motives that actuated Verazzani in presenting the elaborate and glowing report of his wonderful voyage. That his report was somewhat exaggerated, Francis I. himself discovered, years afterwards, when Cartier had succeeded in laying the foundation of a great colony. But it suited the Florentine's purpose to make the most of the opportunity. On the other hand he was naturally proud of his own achievements, and his vanity led him to paint such a picture as would awaken the admiration, for himself, of all his acquaintances and friends. But, more important still, was the desire to be again commissioned by the French King to visit the New World. He imagined that a glowing report would secure him that privilege, and he knew that wealth and fame awaited the one so commissioned. In the first case he was possibly successful; that is to say, he succeeded in becoming a hero in the eyes of thousands, and of being looked upon as one of the great men of his time. However, he failed in securing his second and more important object; namely the advantage of paying another visit, at the expense of France, to the land beyond the seas. Possibly had not Francis I. been, at that time, in trouble with his neighbors, were peace declared throughout Europe, and had not France to contend with foreign and domestic enemies, Verazzani might have gained his point, and Canada might have been discovered by him and not by Cartier. But during the ten years of indecision on the part of the King, the Florentine navigator passed out of public notice, and even out of actual existence. So that, when the dream of establishing a new France came back to the King, and circumstances permitted him to put his plans into execution, other men were required, and another leader was in demand. Times had changed, and in their mutations a different generation had sprung up, and to that generation belonged the famous founder of Canada, Jacques Cartier.

SHOOTING THE DEVIL.

A STORY OF THE UPPER GATINEAU.

(By the Editor.)

The Desert is a less rapid and less turbulent river than either the Gatineau or the Eagle. Ascending its waters in an Indian canoe, one is forcibly struck with the mild aspect of the surrounding country, which forms a marked contrast with the rocky wildness of the regions to the north, east and south of that valley. It was on a beautiful evening in September that I first ascended the Desert. Six Indians of the Tête-de-

Boule tribe had come down from their camping ground, some twenty miles up stream, to secure provisions and enjoy a few hours "sight-seeing" at Maniwaki. After spending the day with their fellow-Indians in the village and making several purchases at Logue's general store, they were about to return to their families at the Small Chute, as the place of camping was called. They had two canoes, into which they packed bread, pork, tea, sugar, tobacco, powder, shot and all the results of their primitive "shopping." I was standing on the shore when they were about to start. Tenneketti, one of the crew, whom I had known upon the Black River, recognized me and invited me to accompany them to their camping ground. He told me that they were going to have a special celebration that would interest me greatly. I hesitated at first, but, on condition that they would "paddle me down" the next morning, I agreed to accompany my old friend.

"Twas an evening that Florence might envy,
So rich was the lemon-hued air."

The sun had gone down in a sea of glory, the distant peaks of the Laurentians were still bathed in a crimson flush, the shadow of the hills grew deeper on the valley and the river, the green meadows on both sides of the Desert faded in the gathering twilight; along the eastern horizon, like a spectre of the sky, the harvest moon crept gradually zenithward, one by one the stars came out from their hiding places and twinkled, like diamonds, in the blue of the distant concave, a gentle breeze fanned the brow of night and her sable garments, decorated with innumerable jewels of light, fell upon the landscape; no sound broke the stillness of the surroundings, save the cry, mournful and ghoul-like, of a lone loon upon some distant lake, and the regular splash of the six Indian paddles in the transparent waters of the stream. No onespoke; nor would I have relished any intrusion upon the solemnity of the scene. I felt alone in the wilderness, with scions of the primeval race as guides, the glorious works of the Creator on all sides, the voices of nature whispering inexpressible and delicious things to my soul, and nothing earthly to disturb the musings that once were the delight of my being. Ten miles were passed and the stars became more brilliant and numerous; the milky way spread its arch of light across the firmament; the orb of night rolled higher and shed a more silvery flood upon the hills and valleys and cast a track of glory along the surface of the placid stream—a liquid gleam of soft splendor, like the path of the just to heaven; the meadows undulated into hills; the hills swelled into mountains; the mountains became more wild and rugged; the panorama was changing, when I was startled from my reverie, and my visions of delight vanished at the sound of Tenneketti's voice, as he called to the front canoe to stop and wait for us while we landed at the mouth of a small creek.

They say that there is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous; here was an illustration of that fact. I had been up amongst the stars, dreaming of glories that are not of this earth, building castles in the blue of the vast empyrean, away on the wings of imagination, soaring into realms visited only by the souls of poets, when, whack! whizz! down I came, heels over head, smack upon the rough plane of the most commonplace and vulgar reality of Tenneketti, taking up a jar of highwines, from behind a huge stone at the mouth of the creek, and, with a grunt of seeming satisfaction, lifting it into the canoe. The old Romans said that there was only a step from the Capitol to the Tarpeian Rock—so was this fact illustrated in that night's adventures; but I must not anticipate. The law of Canada inflicts a heavy penalty on any person who sells or procures for the Indians intoxicating liquor. It is not to be had on the reserve. But Tenneketti and his gang were equal to the occasion. A friendly (or unfriendly) blacksmith of Maniwaki purchased the whiskey, and placed it at the point indicated; the Indians, on their way home, secured the "fire-water," and were happy in their triumph over the law and in their long expected "pow-wow." Once the liquor was secured, Tenneketti informed me that they were going to "shoot the devil" that night at the camping ground. I had heard of this ceremony, but had never witnessed its performance; very probably I will never again either hear of or see that peculiar operation of shooting his Satanic Majesty. In fact, I never want to be a spectator at any repetition of the drama of that night. In truth, for a time, I had an idea that the Indians had mistaken myself for the devil, as they seemed to have conceived a very strong desire of practising their rifle-shooting skill upon my body. But we will first reach the camping ground before commencing a description of the war dance around the effigy of the Evil One.

When we came within sight of the birch-bark wigwams of the Tête-de-Boule band, I perceived that there were extraordinary preparations being made for the night's carousal. A fire blazed on a hillock near the shore; the squaws and papooses moved around in all the feverish eagerness that the knowledge of an approaching carnival creates. When our canoes touched the bank and we jumped ashore, there was an evident surprise in store for me, as well as for the women and children. The squaws had not anticipated a white stranger being present to witness their antics of the night; moreover, the Indian women are most bashful by nature. Had I been the Old Nick himself, come for the purpose of giving them an opportunity of shooting at him, a wilder stampede could not have taken place. The squaws gathered their blankets about them, and ran off, cackling, like old hens that had seen a hawk, and the young ones, like frightened chickens, got under their mothers' wings and peeped out to catch a stealthy glimpse of the newly arrived Beelzebub.

(Continued in our next.)