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NOTICE.

Our Agent, MR. W. STREET, who collected our accounts west of Toronto last year, is again visiting all the places on the Grand Trunk, Great Western, Canada Southern, Northern and Toronto, Grey and Bruce Railways. Subscribers are requested to settle with him all accounts due.

Subscribers are once more requested to take notice that the dates to which their subscriptions are paid are printed on their wrappers with each number sent from the office, thus: 1.75 would signify that subscriptions have been paid up to January, 1878; 7.77 up to July, 1877. This is worthy of particular attention, as a check upon collectors and a protection to customers who, not seeing their dates altered after settling with the collector, should after a reasonable time communicate with the office.

CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

Montreal, Saturday, Oct 27th, 1877.

A LITERARY CONVENTION.

It will be remembered that a few weeks ago an American traveller, with characteristic ignorance and superciliousness, wrote his impressions of the Province of Quebec, and indulged in the usual vulgar attacks against French Canadians for their alleged faulty knowledge of their native tongue, and total want of a national literature. Generous pens immediately came to the rescue in the Montreal Gazette and Quebec Chronicle, not only disproving the traveller's charges, but revealing a record in favour of our fellow-citizens of French origin which will doubtless prove a surprise to the public at large. We might, in the cause of justice, take up the same theme, but we prefer to leave the work of vindication to the pen of no less able and authoritative a writer than REV. JAMES ROY, M.A., of this city, whose paper on the subject, recently read before the Athenaeum Club of Montreal, we publish to-day in full, laying aside for that purpose a mass of editorial and other original matter. We call the attention of all our readers to this study. We may add, however, that, having lately received a number of original works published by French Canadian literary writers, we shall review them fully in subsequent numbers of this journal, and to disprove the charge of the American writer against the primary schools of Lower Canada, shall call particular attention to the remarkable series of school books just put forth by MESSRS. ROLLAND of this city, under the sanction of the Education Office. We may further state, in illustration of the literary activity reigning among our fellow countrymen, that there is to be a grand Convention, at Ottawa, on the 24th and 25th inst., of Canadian men of letters, chiefly French, where such important questions as the following will be discussed:

- I. The best means of developing French Canadian literature.
II. The value of our historical archives; the places where they are stored, and the means to be employed to ensure their preservation and publication.
III. The rights of authors in Canada; what they are, and what they should be.
We look forward with much interest to this meeting, and trust that as many of our English-speaking men of letters as possible will join in the movement.

The illustration of the Dominion Gun Practice in our last will have afforded some idea of those remarkable slopes for the development of water powers on each side of the Falls of Montmorency, near Quebec, which constitute that stream, probably the greatest in milling capacity of any known; but this great natural motive-power, which will one day, we trust, be found converting the wheat of the great North-West into flour for the use of more heavily peopled lands, has not yet been availed of to more than a limited extent. We trust our engineers will give the subject their consideration, and tell the world with the authority of experts what opportunities for expansion in commerce we possess in this Province. The lands in the neighbourhood have already to some extent come into the hands of Montrealers, we believe.

A REMARKABLE development in industrial art was exhibited at Quebec, in a stocking-knitting machine, which will turn out a handsome sock in seven minutes. If it should be found possible to bring the price of this little hand-loom down to the level of the general means of the people, what a resource might not here be availed of for making the winter evenings conducive to the common stock of the family, or even for providing work for great numbers of the unemployed in the cities. After the whole population had got itself suited with warm underfooting, there would still be a demand in countries beyond our own borders for articles produced with so much cheapness and rapidity.

Will the managers of the, in many respects, well equipped South Eastern Counties Railway be good enough to look to their platform at Sutton Junction Station—the feeder, as it is, for a most beautiful part of the Eastern Townships? Quite recently it had developed such a slope in the boards that there was some risk of a passenger's feet coming into acquaintance with the wheels of the engine. We do not think we shall hurt the feelings of the Directors, who will rather welcome our reminder in their own and the public interest.

A DEBT of gratitude is due to MR. BLAKE for his Act prohibiting the carriage of firearms and other lethal weapons on the person, except in very special cases. We hail the measure, together with that for the suppression of gambling on the steamers, railway cars, etc., as an evidence that our politicians are giving some attention to the social needs of the time. If we may believe the journals, other measures will follow in furtherance of similar important objects.

IN deference to a patriotic requisition from Eastern Ontario for "No Water Stretches," the navigable rivers of the North-West will of course be done away with. The difficulty that presents itself is to know where to make a beginning—and in the interval we can all try to appreciate the grand provision that is there found for the services of man.

THE FRENCH LANGUAGE IN CANADA.

According to the census of 1871, the population of the four Provinces which at first formed the Canadian Confederation, is, 3,485,761. That of the Province of Quebec is 1,191,516. The French population of the four Provinces is 1,082,940. That of the Province of Quebec is 929,817, or over 26 per cent of the population of the Dominion. The influence of so large a population of French origin, massed in one Province, makes the question of the character and influence of the French language in Canada one of vital importance to the whole country. The character of a people largely depends upon the literature their language opens up for them, and the religious thought with which it is associated. The isolation which must exist between the French people of Canada and the majority of the population of the continent must affect the former even more than the latter. Hence the tendencies of the French language, in their influence on our national destiny, are of interest to both scholars and statesmen. Besides, there is a peculiar value in a language, viewed in itself, which may decide, to a great extent, the propriety or impropriety of its preservation.

The study of language contributes no small share to the solution of important questions raised by other branches of science or philosophy: It aids in the comprehension of the complex nature of man. It unfolds and illustrates human history. It aids in the solution of problems of metaphysics and religion. By it, we are enabled, to a considerable degree, to test the authorship and age of ancient documents. By the laws it reveals, we are enabled to predict many probabilities of the future.

In Canada, we have a form of the French language which is peculiar to its own locality. Whether to call it a dialect, or a patois, or neither, is somewhat difficult to determine. A dialect is usually regarded as a local branch of a language, distinguished from other branches of the same language mainly by peculiarities of pronunciation, and possessing a literature in which these peculiarities are marked by the spelling. A patois is taken to be a dialect which has lost its literature, and has become only a spoken idiom. Thus, in ancient Greece, there were the Attic, Ionic, Doric, and Aeolic dialects, whose memory is perpetuated in the works respectively of Xenophon, Herodotus, Theocritus, and Sappho. In modern Greek, we have the dialect of Asia Minor, the Chiotic, the Cretan, the Cyprian, the Ploponnesian, and the dialect of the Ionian Islands. In English, we have the dialects of Devonshire, Dorsetshire, Yorkshire, and many others. What Max Muller calls the dialects of the Friesian Islands may be taken as examples of what are called by the French word patois, a Friesian literature having existed in the 12th century, but none such being now found. The French language as spoken in Canada has a literature and a peculiar pronunciation; but the latter is not marked in the literature of the country by any general peculiarity in spelling, so that it scarcely accords with the definition of a dialect. Its pronunciation is quite different from that of Lyons or Orleans; but it has a literature, though no one at a distance from Canada, in reading that literature, would suspect the existence of a pronunciation different from that which prevails in the best society of France. Indeed, so pure is the French of M. Faucher de St. Maurice, that its Canadian origin was publicly denied. M. Hector Fabre, M. Chauveau, M. Garneau, together with Cernizy, Franchette, Lemay, Routher, Marmette, Benjamin Sulte, and others, are writers whose productions have been favourably compared with the works of some of the best authors of modern France. In the United States, English is spoken with peculiarities of pronunciation, expressions and idioms, some of which are but the heir-loom of English shires from which the ancestors of many Americans emigrated; yet no one thinks of calling the English spoken south of the line forty-five either a dialect or a patois. The French spoken in the Province of Quebec is in precisely the same circumstances, and is, properly speaking, neither a dialect nor a patois; nor does it branch off into dialects of its own. Different localities have their various terms which custom has sanctioned, and which are often not used beyond those localities; and the whole country uses terms not considered correct in France to-day; but the French of Gaspé is, on the whole, the same as that of Manitoba. Thus, along the line of the Intercolonial Railway, one hears a fence-rail called pieu and not perche; an embankment is tambe and not cochon. At Rivière-du-Loup, the clearing out of a ditch is represented by the verb chasser; at Rimouski, by enter; at Trois-Pistoles, by sider. In Montreal, a certain kind of fried cake known in France as crêpequinte is called baguette, and in Quebec, crêpequinte. A hay-belt is, in Montreal, greenier-à-bain, and in Quebec, as in France, feuil. The shafts of a vehicle are called taucail instead of haucards. Reins (of harness) are in one place called gaudes, and in another, coedevine. Loin-gue is used for langue. Edisse is used for bâtiment; décaut for feu; patouque, a corrupt form of patate, for pomme-de-terre; intellète for intelligence; and pas capable for je ne puis, or je ne peux pas. Smoke is often called bouano and not fumée. Gooseberry is gulle and not gros-cille. The furniture of a church is often called ménage and not mobilier. Nevertheless, the language, as a whole, over the entire country, amongst educated and uneducated alike, is the same.

The history of Canada unfolds the fact that the sources of the earliest streams of immigration are found around the northwestern shores of France, chiefly in the vicinity of the Golfe de St. Malo. The names Dieppe and Rouen, in Normandy; of St. Malo, in Bretagne; and of LaRochele, in Anjou, are the first to occur in the accounts of early attempts at settlement. The settlers were chiefly peasants, sailors, and soldiers, under the leadership of priests, traders, and noblemen. The time of the earliest permanent settlement was in 1608, two years before the assassination of Henry IV. by Ravailiac. The first birth of a child of French parents was that of Eustache Martin, son of Abraham Martin and Marguerite Langlois, at Quebec, on the 24th of May, 1621. In 1663, the colonists numbered 2000. (Boyd, Hist. Can., p. 29.) In 1665, a large immigration so increased the population that in 1667 it numbered 4312. (p. 31.) In 1682, it amounted to 10,000. (p. 34.) In 1703, it was 15,000. (p. 39); in 1736, 40,000. (p. 42); in 1750, 65,000. As Canada was ceded to England in 1763, it will be seen that the bulk of the French population arrived in Canada during the reigns of Louis XIV. and Louis XV.

From the review of the sources of the population, the character and social position of the

people, and the time of their immigration, we can ascertain the relation of the language spoken by the colonists to that of their native land both then and now.

After Gaul had been conquered by Caesar, the low Latin of his soldiers, with an almost imperceptible Keltic element and a larger amount of Teutonic speech, gradually developed, north of a line drawn from LaRochele to Grenoble, into the Langue d'Oïl. This, again, on the lips of different tribes, separated into four leading dialects, — Norman, Picard, Burgundian, and French, or the dialect of Ile de France. In 987, Hugh Capet, duke of France, was elected King; and then commenced the growth of the political power of that ancient Province which, after less than four centuries, saw at its feet Berri, Picardie, Touraine, Normandy, Languedoc, and Champagne. The subjection of Normandy took place in 1204, A.D. The dialect of Ile de France then prevailed, first in the official records of the conquerors, and afterwards in the literary works of the country, while the Norman dialect sank into a mere patois. The abandonment of the last remnant of the Latin declensions in the fourteenth century marks the division of modern French from ancient French. The French of the 15th century is complete; and, in the 16th century, during which the founding of Canada took place, the French became the court, legal and literary language from the Seine to the Loire. For more than four centuries, the Norman dialect had been subjected to this growing French. In the Channel Islands, it had been cut off from its communication with the changing influences of the continent at the end of the 12th, or the beginning of the 13th century, when England, under King John, lost Normandy, but retained those islands. In its home on the mainland, therefore, the Norman must have ceased to exert any greater influence than that which might arise from such local peculiarities of expression and pronunciation as those which the habits of an illiterate people would preserve amid the changes of centuries.

At the time when Canada was founded, Parisian French was less correct than that of the quarter from which the mass of the early settlers of Canada proceeded. In the first French Grammar ever published, written in London by an Englishman, John Palsgrave, in 1530, and now so rare that only one copy exists in France, the author reproaches the Parisians for substituting the letter z for r, as they said Parisiens and Mars for Parisiens and Mars. (Angel, Hist. F. Lit. p. 22.) An examination of the classics of the Augustan age of French literature will prove that some things now regarded as oddities that the French of Canada is a degenerate patois were the standard pronunciations of the times preceding and during the most brilliant period of the French theatre. The three sounds which most distinguish the French-Canadian pronunciation are those of the diphthong ou, the syllable ou, and the letter a, which are sounded respectively ou, a, and ou. Brachet, in his Etymological Dictionary (introd. p. lix.) tells us that, in reference to the first of these sounds, the words ouzo, loi, foi, ou, were pronounced by Molière, Louis XIV. and, in the case of the word ou, as late as 1730, by Lafayette, ouzo, loi, foi, ou. The modern Parisian sounds were noticed as peculiar even by Palsgrave, and were laughed at as vulgar and clownish by Molière. That Brachet is correct may be seen from a couplet found in Le Miroir, Act. I., Sc. I.:

Lorsqu'un homme vous vient embrasser avec joie, Il faut bien le payer de la même monnaie.

The last words were evidently intended to make rhyme; but, as Parisians now pronounce and spell the words, joie and embrasser cannot do so; joie must have been pronounced joie. Our editor, M. Dubois, appends to these lines the following note: "Joie et embrasser ne font pas plus aujour d'hui."

We are not without evidence that the French-Canadian pronunciation of the letter a is that of the Norman invaders of England. We all know how it is pronounced by those military "swells" who, under the new regulations of the army in England, cannot think of obeying the commands of one who has been raised from the ranks to be their superior officer, or who are rendered indignant by the presence of a "blasted fence." Earle, in his "Philology of the English Tongue," (pp. 117, 121, 161,) shows that this pronunciation is, doubtless, a remnant of the influence exerted upon English speech by the Norman invaders. His remarks are borne out by Chaucer, whose Chauntecleer, Messchaunce, Canterbury, and Flaundes might be added to the examples given by Earle. That the representation of the French, as well as the Saxon a by ou is not confined to nasal syllables is evident from the word lough (lawb), which Earle quotes as an example. The Rev. M. Laflour informed me that Athanasie Coquerel, père, used, only 25 years ago, to pronounce the letter a with the sound ou, as French Canadians do now. Hyde Clarke, in his "Handbook of Comparative Philology," p. 5, says: "Thus in France there are those who have heard the vowel a called by the old men ou, which is now made ah."

I once passed two Canadian women who were conversing aloud; and, as I passed, I caught the remark of one and the reply of the other: C'est pau moué, and c'est verd. On another occasion, on asking what was the matter with a broken wagon, I received the answer, Le spring est cassé. In these short sentences were combined the marked peculiarities of Canadian pronunciation of French; yet the sounds were not