

THE OLD MANUSCRIPT; A MÉMOIRE OF THE PAST.*

BY H. V. C.



HE quaint old city of Montreal presented a gay scene, when, on a clear summer day, a signal gun from the citadel, announced the expected armament from Quebec, setting out on the long voyage to Cataraqui, (Kingston) and Michilimakinac. The French colours ran lightly up the tall flag-staff, and floated proudly in the sun shine, as the flotilla which had been signalled,—not by telegraph, but by a swift footed indian runner,—at the foot of the current St. Mary, came up with the tide,—above a hundred batteaux and birch canoes, some gaily decked with streamers, while every one in perfect harmony dimpled the rippling waves, and glancing in the sunshine rained myriad drops, like a shower of fairy gems. As they approached the landing place, the clear notes of a bugle floated cheerily over the town, and came back in silver echoes from the Royal mountain, while a brave salute from the citadel was answered by a similar welcome from the little island of St. Helen, where a body of troops, waiting to join the expedition, were then encamped.

We have already intimated that it was a brilliant summer day, and the shores were lined with citizens of all ages and degrees, come out to enjoy the spectacle,—for, till the long expected millennium arrives, military pageants will continue to excite the admiration of an idle crowd. All were in holiday attire, and the pretty French girls with sparkling dark eyes peeping roguishly from their ample hoods, their natural grace, and coquettish airs, gave life and vivacity to the scene. The city could boast no wharves in those primitive days, and the long line of boats curved gracefully to the shore, and moored in exact order

beneath the bank,—then steep and rugged, where the Bonsecour market now lifts its shining dome. There was no lack of shouting and cheering to greet the prospective heroes of a toilsome campaign, and as the troops landed and formed in order, and the music struck up a popular air, scores of little urchins shouldered sticks and staves, and with mimic valour strutted their puny limbs and followed to the soldiers' quarters.

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The day was far advanced, and the excitement of the morning passed away, when two cavaliers in undress uniform, might be seen strolling along the banks of the river, engaged in earnest conversation. The St. Lawrence was then fringed with stately trees, along the embankment of the town, and the young men seemed to enjoy the quiet seclusion which was scarcely broken by a sound, save the ceaseless, monotonous chûte of the rapids, which foamed and chafed through the narrow channel of Nun's island, and for hundreds of miles had rolled their fretful course in lake and stream, from the stupendous fountain of Niagara.

Beautiful was the scene, for no where is there seen richer verdure, more affluence of sunshine, and foliage of such brilliant tint and luxuriant abundance, as in the brief period of a Canadian summer. The young men paused on a slight eminence, where now stand the wind-mills tossing their grotesque arms, near the basin of the canal, and looked long, with admiring eyes.

"We boast truly of the vine-covered hills of old France," said Mavicourt "and her fertile vallies, but, beshrew me! that gush of golden sunset streaming through those trees on the summit of the mountain; that sapphire glow dying these flashing waters; the shadow of those tall trees traced so delicately on yonder smoother waves,—this rich wooded island which the old nuns hold as a dowry for the church, and which is surrounded by breakers like a Pope's anathema, and farther off the pretty island of St. Helen with its groves and quiet glades, dotted by the white tents of our encampment,—truly, Valois, I could turn savage and end my days in roving here."

"Yes, if it would remain always summer," said Adolphe, smiling, "and provided you could find