

the injury addresses itself to two millions of French-Canadians? They take pleasure, it would seem, in forgetting that the expeditions of these navigators terminated either in a speedy death or an immediate return to France of all those engaged therein. It cannot be contradicted, for the facts are there. Then, wherefore, always and incessantly repeat these unpleasant tales which lack even the attraction of novelty? It makes one think of M. Jules Verne, who in his latest romance has heaped together under the history of Canada in 1837, a mass of anecdotes having no bearing whatever upon the situation, and, as will appear astonishing even in the home of Jules Verne, a geography—in the moon.

M. Ferland, in his "*Histoire du Canada*," states very clearly that which experience teaches us: "The foundation of a colony demands of those who will undertake it, sobriety, obedience, a love of order and of work: it is rarely that one finds these qualities in a gaol-bird." Such were, in the 16th and 17th centuries, the beginning of certain colonies, but as to Canada such beginnings produced nothing. It has been necessary to begin all over again.

Australia, in our century, seems to have rehabilitated the element of which I speak. Certainly our century does nothing like any other. At any rate, Roberval and Cartier had not good luck on the shores of the St. Lawrence.

Later the Marquis de la Roche received permission to found a colony, but he never weighed anchor from the ports of France.

In "*L'Histoire des Canadiens Français*" (1), I have related the enterprises of the Malo-ins and other Frenchmen who, from 1544 to 1608, attempted to open up trade with Canada, never colonization. This highly interesting subject has not attracted the attention of the press, for whatever they may affirm, the "descendants" of Cartier count for zero among us, and the Malo-ins, the successors of the great man, have, no more than they, left any traces of their families upon the banks of the St. Lawrence. A little traffic in peltries with the savages, a ship or two once in three or four years, that is all. Never from 1534 to 1608 was any lasting establishment formed in our latitudes. Documents do not permit the supposition of a commencement of a colony, even the most imperfect; it was not even dreamt of. My judgment is not based on what I do not know, but upon that which I have read, and I believe I have read all that bears on this subject.

The letters, narrations and reports of Champlain from 1608 to 1629 show clearly, 1st, that Canada contained no white settler before 1608; 2nd, that no colonization had taken root, nor left a direct representative, nor yet a known half-breed; 3rd that most of the men coming hither between 1608 and 1629 only laboured here temporarily on behalf of their employer's business; 4th, that at the epoch of the taking of Quebec by Kertke (1629) the country contained but one family, and a small number of persons, whose names are no mystery and whose fortunes for the greater part it is easy to follow. Those among them who may be missing after this date were neither numerous enough, nor sufficiently enterprising persons, to have erected beside us a nation either of robbers or half-breeds. I say "robbers" for the satisfaction of those writers who would injure us, and "half-

breeds" for the pleasure of those who would find the savage drop in our veins without explaining why.

There was no colonist "colonizing" in Canada before Louis Hébert (1617), nor before 1644 was there a family composed of a mixture of white and savage—and at any rate, if there had been, it would have counted nothing, because there is not a single case traceable to this source.

Starting from 1629, the descent of all our families is perfectly well established.

The enquiry for a French forlorn hope, or for half-breeds must be made between the two dates of 1518 and 1629. I deny the existence of these two classes of persons, and I defy the most learned historian or virtuoso to bring to light any revelations capable of controverting what I have now said.

By my *Histoire des Canadiens Français*, and my articles, *Les interpretes du temps de Champlain*, *Le golfe St. Laurent* (1600-25), *Les premiers seigneurs du Canada*,* *Pourtincourt en Acadie*, the reader will be able to form a correct idea of the first beginnings of our settlement. All is clear and plain in the first chapter of our history, only the ignorant talk about deserters from ships, convicts, rascals, adventurers, garotters as having composed the first population of our colony.

But here I must stop and rebuke French Canadian journalists, for it is they who to-day keep up this legend of half-breed, criminal, vagabond, disorderly, as the pretended earliest source of our population. Yes! these journalists set themselves without any comprehension of their subject to make it understood that the first Canadians were wretches, rogues and outlaws from France. Journalism in Canada is absolutely given over to politics, and has no other study. If one examines hap-hazard a single year of our newspapers, we shall find therein once a week, that is to say, fifty times in the course of the year, such statements as these: "We, the descendants of Jacques Cartier." Can you point me to one of the companions of Cartier who stayed in Canada longer than a year and who has left descendants? "Sons of Brittany and of Normandy, French-Canadians will always cherish France." Observe particularly that from 1632 to 1700 not an hundred persons came hither of Breton race. Our journalists say "Brittany" because they are haunted with the belief that Cartier colonized Canada. The first Breton families arrived in the St. Lawrence a century and more after Cartier.

"The pioneers of our land were Roberval, Cartier, the Marquis de la Roche, Chauvin, et al." They ought to say the discoverers, the openers-up of trade, so as not to deceive their readers and those who take the word pioneer for the synonym of colonist.

"The Christian religion was planted on the shores of the St. Lawrence by Cartier, Roberval, Champlain." Yes, Champlain, but not Cartier, not Roberval! Canadians, repeat no longer this statement which does you dishonour, and which, above and beyond all, is a falsehood.

The result of these ill-advised statements, so frequent in the press of the Province of Quebec, is to make Europeans believe, and also Americans, and even the English around us that our origin is impure.

S. A. CURZON.

* A translation of this paper has already appeared in THE WEEK.

"OF A' THE AIRTS."

(A tribute to the wife of Robert Burns.)

When Burns was at the height of his popularity, after his winter in Edinburgh, and his return from his roving about his beloved Scotland, he was married to his Bonnie Jean, and took the farm of Ellisland by the Nith. He entered into possession at Whitsuntide, and kept bachelor's hall. There he might be seen, now and then, in the spring directing his plough, a labour in which he excelled; or with a white sheet containing his corn-seed, slung across his shoulders, striding with measured steps along his turned-up furrows, and scattering the grain in the earth. Or, perhaps, he might be seen wandering beside the pleasant river; or, mounted on his horse pursuing his duties as an excise officer among the hills and valleys of Nithsdale, his roving eye wandering over the charms of nature, and muttering his wayward fancies as he roved along. The house being then unfit for occupation at Ellisland, his wife did not come to him until the autumn; and his dreams and fancies were often of her. It was during this period he directed to her the lovely song:

Of a' the airts the wind can blaw
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonnie lassie lives
The lassie I lo'e best.
There wild woods grow and rivers row,
And monie a hill between;
But, day and night, my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

I see her in the dewy flowers
I see her sweet and fair;
I hear her in the tuneful birds,
I hear her charm the air:
There's not a bonnie flower that springs
By fountain, shaw or green;
There's not a bonnie bird that sings
But minds me o' my Jean.

The above circumstances and song are the occasion of the following:—

There's a blur on the face of the late March moon;
The wind pipes shrill, and the chimneys croon;
Around my cottage it searching flies,
And every crack and cranny it tries;
From its wrestling might the elm springs free,
And it wrings a wail from the willow tree.

But the wind of March, as I sit by the fire,
Plays through my heart's æolian lyre,
And to my listening muse it brings
The past and the future on its wings;—
The seer can see, and the singer sing,
When the wild March evening pipes the spring.

And as the firelight darts up clear,
And I see the guid wife sitting near,
A sweet auld sang through my thought will go,—

"Of a' the airts the wind can blow,
I dearly like the wind o' the west,
For there lives the lassie I lo'e best."

When the daisy blooms, and the thrush appears,
One face comes peering across the years;—

'Tis the face of him who toiled and sung,
When Jean was absent, and the love was young:—

"I see her face in the flowers sae fair;
I hear her voice as it charms the air."

My fancy quickens: I see him stand
Alone in the field at Ellisland;
And all around him, on every side
The birds are singing at Whitsuntide;
But, though woods are green and skies are gay,
There's a look in his eyes that is far away.

Then in blissful dreaming he moves along,
And he utters his heart in a joyous song:
"Wi' her in the west the wild woods grow,
The laverocks sing, and the rivers row;
And, though there's monie a hill between,
Ever my fancy is wi' my Jean."

She came, ere the winter, to ben and byre;
She lit on his hearth her poet's fire;
Her smiles were sunshine upon the walls;
Her words dropt sweet as the streamlet falls;
The lassie of song was his wedded wife,—
The heart he longed for was his for life.

O fortunate season, and hopeful time,
When the poet prosper'd in love and rhyme!
When, sowing or reaping, the day went by,
And he ploughed his fields and tented his kye

(1) A work in 8 volumes, illustrated, 1893. The edition of 2,500 copies is entirely exhausted.