

PARIS DOCUMENTS.

THE Documents contained in these volumes, are copies of originals in the Archives of the Department of the Marine and the Colonies; in the Archives of the Department of War, and in the Royal Library at Paris.

The general management of Canadian affairs was, for a long time, intrusted to the Department of the Marine in France, which also included the Colonies under its jurisdiction. It was not until about the year 1755, when a general war broke out in America between France and England, that the Department of War appears to have had any particular communications with the French Agents in America; at any rate, nothing of consequence has been found in its Archives previous to that date.

The Archives of the Department of the Marine and the Colonies are very rich in Documents relating to the history of the French Colonies in America. Owing, however, to various causes (prominent among which may be named the unbridled spirit of wanton destruction which seemed to possess the Revolutionists of 1793), these Archives are, at the present moment (1843), in a state of deplorable confusion; and the toil and time required to examine and select from the vast mass of unarranged papers that load their shelves, can scarcely be appreciated by any one who has not himself made personal investigations.

The papers relating to Canada and New-York, are contained in two separate divisions. The one consists of a series of bound volumes, commencing with the year 1663, and ending very abruptly with 1737. This series numbers about seventy volumes, and contains the despatches of the King and his Ministers to the Governors and other functionaries in the French Colonies. It is greatly to be regretted that the volumes subsequent to 1737, are missing. The other, and by far the most fertile repository, is a series of "Cartons," or Portfolios, in which are placed, loosely, hap-hazard, and without the slightest attempt at arrangement, a vast mass of original Documents relating to Canada from 1630 to the period of the Treaty of Paris, 10th February, 1763. There are upwards of one hundred of these "Cartons," each of which contains Documents enough to make two bound volumes of the usual size. It is scarcely possible to conceive a task more appalling to the investigator than an examination of these papers. Dusty, decayed, without order, often without a dato to identify the Document; a despatch of 1670 jostling a paper relating to Dieskau's defeat, an account of the surrender of Quebec, *pelé-mêle*, with a letter of Governor Dougan; the expedition of 1690, mixed up with the attack on Forts William Henry, Frontenac and Duquesne, the Hurons and Manhattan, Boston and the Ottawas, side by side; the contents of these "Cartons" form, indeed, the materials of a brilliant Historical Mosaic, whose riches will repay the patient investigator who does not allow their painful disorder to deter him from the research.

It must be evident that this state of things was embarrassing in no small degree. It not only very greatly increased the labor of the investigations, but was found that, in a great many instances, valuable papers were missing from the mass. If, therefore, the Historian, in looking over these Transcripts, hereafter, should observe deficiencies in the series, he may feel assured that they have not been so left without regret and mortification on the part of the collector.

The Archives of the "Department of War," however, present a gratifying contrast, in respect to arrangement, to those of the "Marine and the Colonies." The papers are chronologically arranged in