

the colours. Several of his pieces owed their success chiefly to the actuality of the subject treated rather than to their artistic merit—for example, the lyrical verses in which he essayed to sing the victory of Châteauguay.

The hymn of the 'Victory of Châteauguay' secured its author the friendship of the hero of that day. De Salaberry, wishing to meet the poet who had extolled his military deeds, invited him to his table. The soldier-poet went to Chambly; he passed a few hours in the colonel's retreat there, and on returning from the visit wrote his poem on 'Chambly.'

During his travels on Canadian soil Mermet could not but admire the magnificent spectacles presented by nature. He is, we believe, the first Canadian poet to sing of Niagara; he set himself to describe it, and his lines possess the special merit of precision.

It is not, however, in Mermet's poems of patriotism and war, nor even in his descriptive poetry, that the author's best and most characteristic spirit is to be found. The adjutant of de Watteville's regiment loved raillery above everything. This French soldier is merry. He loses no opportunity of throwing off a humorous couplet or of distributing impromptu rhymes among his friends. To him everything is matter for amusing or satirical verse. In the *Saberdache* of Jacques Viger many of these light and often carelessly written poems may still be found; although of little value, they were received enthusiastically by the readers of 1813.

Mermet returned to France in 1816. In Canada, therefore, he was merely a visitor. Nevertheless it is plain, from certain literary discussion in which he took part in *Le Spectateur*,¹ that his influence upon the poets of his time was considerable.

Mermet has given us several examples of that sprightly, bantering literature so long practised by Quesnel. He is not, of course, a great poet; he did not even take pains to be a second-rate poet. Yet he stimulated the ambition of those who at the beginning of the nineteenth century were endeavouring to make the new-born literature of Canada lisp in numbers.

¹ *Le Spectateur*, September 16 and 23, and October 21, 1813.