

It would be pleasant to believe all this ; yet, although the good consequences of cultivating wild lands, as respects human health, admit of little doubt, the effect of such cultivation on climate, and more especially the Canadian climate, would appear to be infinitesimally small.

It is to be feared that the enormous frozen surfaces, for three-fourths of the year, to the north, north-east and north-west of Canada, that are the main sources of our winter cold, can be affected little, if at all, by narrow selvages of cultivation along the St. Lawrence and its tributaries for five months in the year ; or even the broader area of the Upper Province. And we know that this cultivation cannot extend northwards, over the lines of rocky and irreclaimable mountains.

As far as the writer has been able to discover, after paying much attention to the subject, no proofs exist of any greater winter severity two or three hundred years ago than at present. The severe and unaccustomed cold would naturally be exaggerated by the first European visitors ; yet we find that the snow disappeared, the rivers opened, and, after intercourse with the white men had been established, the ships arrived nearly at the same time as now. Making due allowance for traveller's stories, and the inflated descriptions of these hyperborean regions, it may be fairly questioned whether Captain Jacques Cartier's winter was as cold as our last. The writer knows by personal experience that the winter of 1827-28 *was not*. Still, the idea of a climate gradually becoming milder and more genial, even though unsupported by evidence, is a harmless and agreeable delusion.

But although no evidence of any change of climate since the time of the Indians has been brought to the writer's knowledge, he is certain that a change for the better, in a sanitary point of view, has taken place in several parts of the Province ; and that some spots, which so late as twenty-five or thirty years ago, were very unhealthy, have decidedly improved, and deserve this character no longer.

For instance, in 1830, when a company of the 66th was quartered in Isle-aux-Noix—a small alluvial island in the river Richelieu—intermittent and remittent fever attacked half the men, and twenty-four of them for whom there was no hospital accommodation at the place, were brought into the Regimental Hospital in Montreal. This happened in May and June, and several other cases occurred in the autumn. Since that time a great sanitary change has taken place, and during the last seven or eight years there has not been a healthier station in Canada than Isle-aux-Noix.

This appears strange and paradoxical, considering the topography of the island ; and it is not probable that the clearing and drying of the neighbouring country has tended to this improvement, for the swampy banks of