

packed into this dismal and noisome hole like so many sardines in a barrel. We could make our way to our hammocks only after repeated blows on our limbs and head. A sense of delicacy forbade our disrobing, and our clothes in time made our backs ache. The rolling and pitching loosened the fastening of our hammocks and hopelessly entangled them. On one occasion I was pitched out sprawling on a poor Canadian officer. It was quite a time before I could extricate myself from the ropes and wraps, meanwhile the officer had scarcely breath enough to give vent to his profanity.

"Another disagreeable feature was the company we were thrown in with day and night. We had to shun them as much as possible. But the worst of all was the stench and vermin. We had on board a hundred soldiers or so, freshly enrolled, each of whom carried a whole regiment of "Picardie" (a euphemism for an insect as unpleasant to name in English as in French).

"In less than a week these ravenous 'Picards' migrated in all directions. No one was free from their attacks, not even the Bishop or the captain. Every time we went on deck we could see that we were covered with them. We found them even in our shoes.

"Another centre of infection were eighty smugglers who had already passed a twelvemonth in jail. They also sent out swarms of marauders. These wretched men would have caused the heart of a Turk to melt with pity. They were half naked and covered with sores; some were eaten alive with worms. All that we could do did not prevent the outbreak among them of a pest which attacked all indiscriminately, and carried off twenty of our men at a stroke."

Such were Aulneau's surroundings during those three months on the wild Atlantic. "And yet while the ship-fever was burning him up, he was assiduous in caring for the unhappy wretches in the hold of the 'Ruby.'" He was hurried ashore and when the crisis was over he had a bad relapse. He finally recovered and was told to prepare for his fourth year examination in theology, "of which," the record says, "he acquitted himself with ease."

Here enters the explorer de la Vérendrye. The world was crazy at that time about the mysterious land towards the Pacific.