

the songs and legends, the characteristic customs, the phases of thought and feeling, the very local and personal aroma of a rapidly changing civilization. Much of what de Gaspé has so vividly painted from his boyish reminiscences had faded out of the life upon which his alert eyes rested in old age. The origin of the romance, as given by his biographer, the Abbé Casgrain, is as follows :

When, in 1861, that patriotic French-Canadian publication the *Soirées Canadiennes* was established, its inaugurators adopted as their motto the words : " Let us make haste to write down the stories and traditions of the people, before they are forgotten." M. de Gaspé was struck with the idea ; and seeing that the writers who were setting themselves the laudable task were all young men, he took the words as a summons to his old age, and so the book came to be written.

Patriotism, devotion to the French-Canadian nationality, a just pride of race, and a loving memory for his people's romantic and heroic past—these are the dominant chords which are struck throughout the story. Of special significance, therefore, are the words which are put in the mouth of the old seigneur as he bids his son a last farewell. The father has been almost ruined by the conquest. The son has left the French army and taken the oath of allegiance to the English crown. " Serve thy new sovereign," says the dying soldier, " as faithfully as I have served the King of France ; and may God bless thee, my dear son ! "

In the present day, when nationalism in Quebec appears rather given to extravagant dreams, it would be well for the distant observer to view the French Canadians through the faithful medium which de Gaspé's work affords him. Under constitutional forms of government it is inevitable that a vigorous and homogene-