

THE MYSTERY AT THE CHATEAU DES ORMEAUX.

By J. G. BORRISOR, Sydney, Cape Breton.

Ten years ago—the exact date is a matter of no importance—I was living in the pleasant and picturesque city of Quebec, and among the acquaintances that I made soon after my arrival was the Abbé Letellier. He was connected with one of the educational institutions of the city, and was considered one of the best scholars in the colony. To him I was indebted, not only for numerous facts respecting the early history of Lower Canada, but for many interesting details of the manners and customs of the French Canadians. Under his guidance Quebec and its suburbs became as familiar to me as the old town where I was born. Even now whilst I write, I can see the tin-roofed buildings creeping up the sides, or nestling at the foot of that noble promontory, which overlooks the dark waters of the river that carries to the ocean, many hundred miles below, the tribute of the great lakes of the West. Again am I bathed by the mist of the lovely fall of Montmorency, tumbling in one mighty leap from the rocks, nearly three hundred feet above, or I am “coasting” down the sides of the immense ice-cones which are formed at the foot, and afford so much amusement to the pleasure-seekers of jovial Quebec, during the months that the Frost King holds the country in his icy grasp.

But I must remember that I have not sat down to describe the social or natural characteristics of the old capital of Canada. I have a short story to tell, not connected immediately with Quebec, but with a pretty village which is situated, a short distance from the city, on the St. Lawrence. Soon after my introduction to the Abbé, I stated that it was my intention, at the earliest opportunity, to visit some of the old French villages and see the *habitant* in his own home. Thereupon the Abbé very kindly offered to give me letters of introduction to some friends of his own, at the village in question,—which is called, like so many others in Canada, after one of the Saints so numerous in the Roman Catholic Calendar—and assured me at the same time that there I would see the *habitant*, very little altered from what he was last century when he came under the dominion of Great Britain. Before I had availed myself of this offer, the Abbé called on me at my lodgings, and stated that it was his intention, two days later, to take a trip into the country, and that he would be very happy to have me as his companion. I gladly accepted the invitation, and made all the arrangements necessary to accompany him at the time agreed upon.

Early in the morning of a fine September day, when the sun was just rising above the surrounding hills and lighting up the tin roofs of the city so that they fairly shone, I was seated in the Abbé's study, a cosy apartment well lined with books in French and English. We soon took our places in the “Calèche”—a sort of gig—of which the Abbé was to act as driver, and were on the point of starting off when a gentleman crossed the street quickly and handed my companion a letter, saying something at the same time in French, the purport of which did not reach me. I recognized him immediately as a young man who