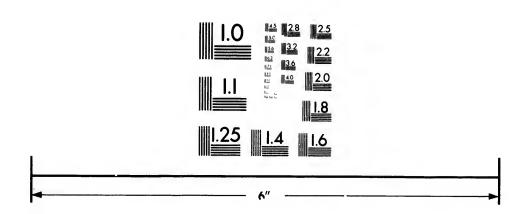


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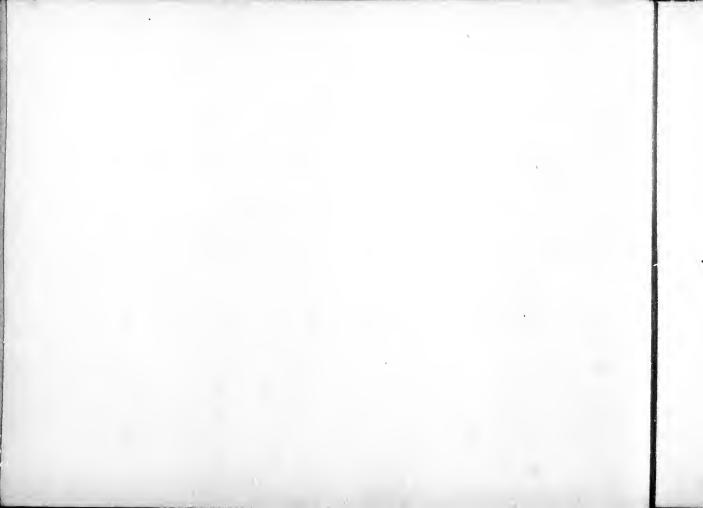
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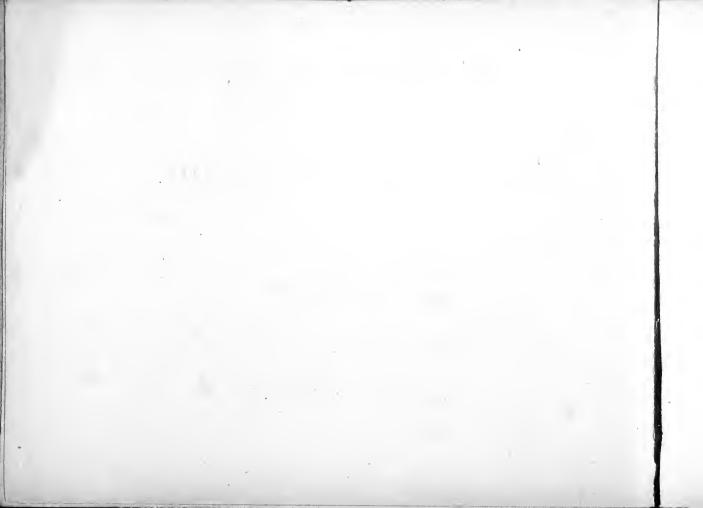
THE CHATEAU SAINT-LOUIS,

BY

J. M. HARPER,

The author of "Our Jeames."

"Je me souviens."



To the Hon. Justice Chauveau, Q.C., LL.D.,

the Literature-loving Son of a

Distinguished Litterateur,

These Historico-topographical Verses

are Respectfully Inscribed by

a Citizen of Quebec

on the occasion of the

Unveiling of Champlain's Monument,

21st September, 1898.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Samuel de Champlain, the founder of the city of Quebec and Governor of New France, was born in Brouage, in France, in the year 1570, and died, in the fort near the spot where his monument now stands, on Christmas day, 1635, a hundred years after the memorable voyage of Jacques Cartier. His earlier years were spent in the wars of the League and as commander of a vessel in the Spanish fleet sailing for Mexico. In 1603, he took part in Pontgrave's expedition to Canada, and published on his return a description of his attempt at settlement on an island at the mouth of the St. Croix in Acadia, and his explorations on the St. Lawrence. On a later expedition he founded the city of Quebec in 1608, and after defeating the Iroquois, made sundry explorations of Lake Champlain and the Ottawa. In 1612, he was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of New France under Prince de Condé as viceroy, and eight years after, began the fortifications of his capital by erecting Fort St. Louis on the ground which afterwards became the site of the Chateau St. Louis burned in 1834. In 1628, Quebec suffered its first siege under David Kirke, but Champlain was reinstated as governor in 1633, and industriously pursued his plans of colonization until the day of his death. And now, as Dominus Domi (the Master at Home), he is fittingly represented by the monumental statue erected in his honour by the citizens of Quebec a few yards from the site of the fort where he breathed his last. His contemporary, Father Le Jeune, has said of him: "He lived a life of justice and honour, faithful to his king and the company; and in his death he has perfected his virtues with a piety so remarkable that we cannot but be astonished." A complete edition of his works, ably edited by Abbés Laverdière and Casgrain was published at Quebec in 1870.

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"Toutes choses furent si bien ménagées que tout fut en peu de temps en état de nous loger, pour le peu d'ouvriers qu'il y avait, une partie desquels commencèrent un fort pour éviter aux dangers qui peuvent advenir, vu que sans cela il n'y a nulle sûreté en un pays éloigné presque de tout sécours. J'établis cette demeure en une situation très bonne, sur une montagne qui commandait le travers de fleuve Saint-Laurent, et qui est un des lieux les plus étroits de la rivière et tous nos associés n'avaient pu gouter la necessité d'une place forte pour la conservation du pays et de leur bien."—Œuvres de Champlain.

And what Quebec is to Canada from an historical point of view, the Chateau St. Louis is to the city itself. The spot is a pleasure ground for antiquary and poet. Here the imagination may revel in its sweetest delights and draw sunshine from the memorials of primitive colonial life. And if the quaint grouping of buildings within the walls seems but a bit of the old world set down on the borders of the new, the site of Champlain's early home sheds a dreamland light from the social and political traditions of the mother countries beyond the seas.

-The Burning of the Chateau.

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hei his C'est de sa résidence du Fort Saint-Louis que le fondateur de Québec contemplait dans les derniers jours de son existence, l'admirable campagne que sa pensée couvrait de villages et de moissons et d'où son genie voulait faire surgir une France nouvelle.— Ernest Gagnon.

In face of the self-seeking that threatened for long the existence of the little hungry-eyed community at the base of Cape Diamond, he was able to stand bravely by his almost limitless principality in the days of its immaturity; and now to us of the present he looks out from behind the curtain of the past with the heroic light, not of the seventeenth century, but of the middle ages, playing around his features and character.— Champlain's Tomb.

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And Champlain's city, proud with battlement And wall, deep-mouthed and fierce of brow, uplifts Her milder voice and seeks to doff her frown, While yet her rock, with empire flag for crest, Bespeaks the war-stained lore of centuries near Writ golden on the fringe of nature's smile.

- Then and Now.

DOMINUS DOMI,

OR

THE CHATEAU SAINT-LOUIS.

Hail, beauteous shrine of nature, gay festooned With woodland grandeur, where the fervid soul May drink a draught from summer's rippling bloom, Like sweet ambrosial odour mortalized!

Beyond the glacis' slopes as vantage ground
The picture groups—horizoned by the hills
Of dark Laval and Levis' frowning forts.
The river broadening into laughing lake,
Whose face the virgin blue of heaven reflects,
Breaks cadence with a kiss on Orleans Isle,

And laves the cheek of Eden grace and bloom That blushes 'mid a thousand rural tints In view of Montmorency's bridal wreath.

From Cap Rouge glades a fringe of forest runs, Now here, now there, along the fertile plain, Where drowsy nature hums the sower's song Or cheers the reaper in his harvest toils. Bright emblems of Arcadian peace and joy, That blink at commerce rushing through the streets, The cowering hamlets dotted o'er the glebe— Sweet clustering gems that glimmer in the light — Bespeak themselves the havens of a peace That hovers, like an angel, in the air. Near banks of velvet moss and waving fern The river's silvery links steal through the groves, Where brooklets find their strength of woodland song, Where laughing poplars quiz the solemn pines;

Then leap the waters in their hissing haste
The rocks of old Lorette, like headlong steed;
Till, weary grown with frolic's escapade,
Befoamed with many a flake, they lave the holms,—
Now creeping through a silent salmon pool,
Now bubbling o'er the minnows in their play,
Now singing requiem near the old graveyard.

And still to charm the scene with varying light,
The contrast lies beyond the shades below,
Where dance in myriads sun-born sparkling gems
Around the summer's fleet at anchor near.
Nor far is heard the hum of noonday life
That seeks not hither from its toilsome gains,
Till sunset sends it climbing up the hill
To rest on threshold of the moon's fair realm,
On kiosked terrace or on esplanade.

The Chateau's faded splendour shines anew In later festal halls; and when the tints Of golden twilight lave the pathways near, 'Tis then a thousand voices fill the air With gleeful sounds — gay citizens astir To breathe the soothing balm of eventide. Whence comes the music near its open courts As flit the shadows round the lilac-lawn? Whose ghosts are these that dismal flit around The lingering aspect of the olden time, When brilliant groups of knights and courtly dames Rang gallery and garden with their cheer?

Within a flood of festive light that glares
A dazzling nucleus 'mid encircling gloom,
Where earth below seems heaven for brilliant stars
That twinkle in the landscape and the glass
Of waters gleaming like a nether sky,

Two streams of gayety go tripping past: Now here, now there, they time their gladsome pace To music's strains that sweeten friendship's hour, That mingle with the whispered tale of love Soft breathed and coy in ear of blushing maid, Or yet renewed to joy the matron's cares. And is it here, on ground where living mirth Its incense burns to scent the evening shades, Where caste and kindred join the wreathing throng To wile away the irksomeness of life? Is't here we seek the spirits that sentry keep To watch how human joys repeat themselves?

Yes, here it is, where other walls still throw
Their silken shadows on the terrace lawn,—
Here where is seen the river's rippling smile,
As Phœbus weaves his evening web of gold
Around the woodland setting of the scene!
The breeze makes grotto of the terrace-nooks

That sentinel the frowning rock; and here
Of choice escaped awhile from commerce-cares,
The memory, cradled on the velvet charms
Of nature, hums its olden song, and plays
With history's fingers to assure its tune.

'Tis vantage-ground; for here the fort was raised To pioneer the prowess of New France. Ere prolicidal lewdness dared betray. Even here, the sepulchre of war's behest, Seen through the telescope of time reversed, Reads curious epitaph, as near converge The weird perspective shadows of events Which old Saint-Lawrence saw within his realms When times of eld were at a second birth.

In eagle's eyry that defiance bade To cunning lurking in the glades around, The hero of St. Croix, intrepid borne,

Sought destiny beyond the seas, where realm Was wilderness, a kingdom unsubdued. In name of God and king, 'twas his to guide The restlessness of man, and even seek From craft alliance in the cause of peace; 'Twas his with threads of woe to weave a wreath Of glory for the brow of France; alas! To see disaster crown his several toils When foreign foe beset his forest home. And still his fame sounds sweet in nature's song On hill and dale around the river-lake: For was it not the anthem his the first To hear, as solace of vice-regal cares — Even his the first to bless, as round him pressed, The dismal dawning of a fate severe That since has been the halo round his name? And as the years saw realized their hopes, When regal pomp sought place beyond the seas,

And palmier days grew sweet in courtesy,
The Chateau's walls arose to crown the breach
Where stood the fort of Champlain's first defence;
For here it was there thronged the old noblesse
To seek the fame the gay Versailles refused,
And shed the lustre of its court abroad.
Here courtiers proud, and belted knights have paced
These lingering battlements beneath our feet,
Here held they in the halls high festival
Or council state, where pageantry a new
Reflection shone from Bourbon majesty.

And dare we not, within the corridors,
Catch glimpse between of luxury's fading couch
Adorned with trappings of vice-regal sway —
Perchance behold the poet-painter's touch
Reveal a tale our own in heroes ours
Whose deeds shine golden in the light of time.

Beyond, within the chamber most remote, Where, drooped with ample folds of red and gold, The throne commands the seats of councillors. Is seen uplift on Parian pedestal The statue of the king who boldly sought Renown through deeds his own; and as we scan The rigid lines where lip meets nether lip. We read the record of a spirit that rose Above the flatteries of minionry,— Ne'er trusting sceptre in another's hands To guide the destiny of sovereign power In France, the New or Old.

And yonder near,
This side the throne, as if to guard it still,
Are seen to glance the haughty Cardinal's eyes,
As, through the art that dares to tell the truth,
There comes from them the light that men had feared,
Made milder by the rays that women loved.

And strange, so far away from scenes of yore,
We here may read the tale of princely craft,
With aims admired that sought a country's good
With aims abhorred that sought its own advance,
And yet make great the less in what was done
For France beyond, where vain was seen for long
The budding feudal strength bestowed on it
A seeming ground for greatness yet to be.

On other side, in purple robes adorned,
Is seen the dignity of Buade's grace
Portrayal fitting of a feudal lord,
Who thought to rule a king, yet stooped to find
His strength in court intrigue and homage paid
To beauty's power in her who called him spouse.
'Twas his the hand that shaped a destiny
Anew, where Champlain dared impending doom;
As else 'twas his to show, in rule renewed,
How far the great in littleness is seen.

Behind the gildings of the chair of state,
A colour contrast to its crimson glare,
There hangs the portrait of Laval: his robes,
The simple vestments of a priest, betray
No churchly pomp: 'tis only when the light
Plays round his face is seen the prelate-king,
Who swayed a realm beyond the will of king,
And gave it firm abode in western wilds.

And Colbert's craft that withered Fouquet's fame, Looks out from eyes on spacious canvass near To turn its glance on Richelieu the great! The smile that wreathes his lips still seems to speak Of proud success,— of guile that honest wove A garland-wreath in honour of New France.

And there beneath the country's lilied crest,
In niche retired, is Talon's modest bust,
The wisest of intendants, who, with aims
His own well-curbed, sought prouder fame
In working for a people's weal,— to whom

The smiling fields may well sing lusty praise And commerce raise a lasting loud acclaim; For was't not he who found a wilderness, To make it radiant with a harvest-bloom?

The light is fading, yet we still may see, On western wall where twilight magnifies, Grouped round the gravings of the brave Champlain And Malo's mariner, the forms of those Whose's life's devotion solved a country's fate. The heroes of the past! Their spirits near Are with us still, as float within the courts And corridors the silver accents sweet Of motherland, the sounds they loved so well: A living music echoes through the nooks They knew; the sounds of louder joy approach: The dream takes sudden wing, and ere we know, The spirits near have laughter in their song That wakes us to the life this side of death.

The answer is in the growing feeling that the founder of our city should have within its borders a monument to commemorate his life work, not an ordinary nonument, for his was no ordinary life merely magnified now for us by distance-ffects. Let us raise to his memory something that shall really show that the interprise born to us through him continues to live; something that men shall now of everywhere and that will commemorate the realization of his great life ream, the pathway past Quebec that leads westward to the east.

In a word, is there anything to keep the citizens of Quebec from joining with hose who would assist in raising a *Maison de Champlain* on (or overlooking) the round where the stalwart frame of our first governor had resting place?

- Champain's Tomb.

