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Michel Bibaud



By Judge L. W. Sicotte.



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MICHEL BIBAUD

BY JUDGE L. W. SICOTTE.

As a number of members of the Numismatic and Antiquarian Society have expressed the opinion that Judge Sicotte's memoir on MICHEL BIBAUD should be made available to English readers we have thought well to reproduce an English translation.



MICHEL BIBAUD was born at Côte-des-Neiges on the 20th of January, 1782. His parents were humble farmers. Owing to their limited means, he was unable to begin his studies at an early age, but he relates the circumstances under which he developed his strong taste for the study of the sciences.

"If you will allow me", he observes with the modesty that always relegated him to the second place when he should have ranked first, "if you will allow me to speak of myself, I may tell you it was principally by reading newspapers of a scientific and literary character, that I was led to a regular course of studies. From childhood I was anxious to learn, but this craving for knowledge was

perhaps always mingled with other elements. At the age of seven or eight, my greatest ambition was to become a choir boy, and in order to attain my purpose, I wished to learn how to read, because, as I was made to understand, such was the condition *sine qua non*. Later, when I had passed the reading and writing stage, college life seemed very much like happiness to me. Apart from the desire to increase my knowledge, which I owed chiefly to a few books which fell into my hands, I had a fancy for the collegian's blue uniforms, their sports and public parades. However, this strong desire to enter college, which my parents, living at a considerable distance from the city, were unable to satisfy, because they could not afford to pay my board, gradually died out, so that later when my father inquired if I still wished to go to college, I intimated that the way was too long, without taking the trouble of finding out if it was his intention to make it any shorter. It subsequently happened, that being at my uncle's place and thinking no longer of college, I found a file of Trevoux newspapers. It will be remembered, that these newspapers contained a critical analysis as well as extracts of the various works published at that time. I eagerly read with pleasure almost indescribable, in that file, everything I could, or thought I could, understand. In devouring another file of the same papers I experienced the same sensations. It was then that my taste for study revived, this time without any ulterior

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motives. I was no longer fascinated by surplice or the sache, but with a desire to acquire knowledge so as to make a suitable use of it. It seemed to me that I could never be happy, unless I become conversant with the sciences spoken of in those two volumes. Realizing by my conversation and general trend of thought and inclination that such was my great ambition, my parents finally decided to send me to college whatever it might cost them."

Thus began Bibaud's college career at the age of eighteen, an age when such career is generally brought to a close. In 1800 he entered the college of St. Raphael, formerly Chateau Vaudreuil; of which Mr. Chicoisneau was then director. The college of St. Raphael was founded at Long Point in 1773 by the esteemed Mr. Curateau de la Blaiserie and was later transferred to Montreal. "At the time it was destroyed by fire in 1802" writes Maximilien Bibaud in his account of the material and intellectual progress of Canada, "my father was the first to see it, but the spirit of mischief which is the most accepted disciplinarian among unruly school boys, prompted him to say nothing about it. "After all," he thought, "what is the burning of a college compared to these accursed school tasks with which the pupil is crushed like the ass under his burden."

After the destruction of this institution by fire, the author of *Epîtres et Satires* continued his studies until the opening of the new college where, under

the direction of Mr. Roque, he brought them to a close in 1806. His classmates were Michel O'Sullivan, the young lieutenant who took part in the engagement at Chateauguay and who wrote an account of it entitled "*Témoin Oculaire.*" Later O'Sullivan distinguished himself at the Bar and successively passed from the posts of Solicitor General, and Attorney General, to that of Judge of the Court of Appeal. There was also Jacques Viger, the Canadian antiquarian, numismatist and heraldist, who, according to the saying of Mr. de Puibusque, was the Benedictine of Canada, a new Saumaise or a president Henault. "Although he published but a single work on archeology and historical criticism, he is known beyond our border," wrote Mr. de Puibusque speaking of Jacques Viger. "He is consulted by archaeologists of America and Europe on the most obscure and ancient facts of our history, in the same way that the oracles of Trevoux and of St. Maur were consulted, or as we nowadays refer to the art of verifying dates. He was in himself an *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*, a sort of Royal Society, or rather national, indeed most national, of our antiquarians."

Bibaud also had for classmates Hughes Heney, the able Canadian publicist who was appointed to the Executive Council in 1830, and again in 1842. There were also Grands Vicars Viau, Cadieux, Mignault and St. Germain. Among all these famous

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men, O'Sullivan alone can compete with him for the first place.

His studies once at an end, he gave himself up to teaching and literature. Among his pupils were Judges Lafontaine, Morin and Bruneau, and Lord Selkirk's daughters. The following advertisement appears on the front page of the "*Aurore*" published at the time :

"The undersigned respectfully informs the public that he is living at the house occupied by Miss Proulx, below the New Market, where he continues to give lessons in languages and mathematics, etc., M. Bibaud. For sale at this printing shop, an Arithmetic, (published the year previous) a French alphabet and Geography in miniature." This advertisement appeared for the first time in Number 3 of Volume II of "*L'Aurore*," published Oct. 25, 1812.

He helped to edit the "*Spectateur*," and in 1816 he started the publication of "*L'Aurore*," not the "*Aurore des Canadas*," as his son tells us. The first volume is of the size of an ordinary folio newspaper, but the two following volumes were 8vo, published in weekly numbers of 16 pages each.

In 1820, he published an account of the travels of Gabriel Franchère. His narrative is written in a pleasing style more like fiction, and there are passages in this volume that compare favourably with the best French works. The following description of the Saskatchewan is a good example :

“ La rivière Saskatchewan coule sur un lit com-
 “ posé de sable et d’argile, ce qui ne contribue pas peu
 “ à diminuer la pureté et la transparence de ses eaux,
 “ qui, comme celles du Missouri sont épaisses et
 “ blanchâtres. A cela près, c’est une des plus jolies
 “ rivières du monde. Les bords de la Saskatche-
 “ wine sont tout à fait charmants et offrent en
 “ plusieurs endroits la scène la plus belle, la plus
 “ riante et la mieux diversifiée que l’on puisse voir
 “ ou imaginer ; des collines de formes diverses, cou-
 “ ronnées de superbes touffes de peupliers ; des
 “ vallons agréablement rembrunis, le soir et le matin,
 “ par l’ombre prolongée des coteaux et des bosquets,
 “ qui les décorent ; des troupeaux de légers cabris et
 “ de lourds boeufs Illinois, ceux-là, bondissant sur le
 “ penchant des collines, ceux-ci foulant de leurs pieds
 “ pesants la verdure des prés, toutes ces beautés
 “ champêtres, réfléchies et doublées, pour ainsi dire,
 “ par les ondes du fleuve ; le chant mélodieux et
 “ varié de mille oiseaux divers perchés sur la cime
 “ des arbres, l’haleine rafraîchissante des zéphirs, la
 “ sérénité du ciel, la pureté et la salubrité de l’air ;
 “ tout en un mot porte le contentement et la joie dans
 “ l’âme du spectateur enchanté. C’est surtout le
 “ matin, quand le soleil se lève, et le soir quand il se
 “ couche, que le spectacle est vraiment ravissant, je
 “ ne puis détacher mes regards de ce superbe tableau
 “ que quand l’obscurité naissante l’eut un peu rem-
 “ bruni. Alors, aux doux plaisirs que j’avais goûtés
 “ succéda une tristesse, pour ne pas dire une sombre

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“mélancolie. Comment se fait-il, dis-je en moi-même qu’un si beau pays ne soit point habité par des créatures humaines ? Les chansons, les hymnes, les prières du laboureur et de l’artisan, heureux et paisible, ne seront-ils jamais entendus dans ces belles campagnes ? Pourquoi, tandis qu’en Europe et en Angleterre surtout, tant de millions d’hommes ne possèdent pas en propre un pouce de terre, et cultivent le sol de leur patrie, pour les propriétaires qui leur laissent à peine de quoi subsister ; pourquoi tant de millions d’arpents de terre, en apparence grasses et fertiles, restent-ils incultes et absolument inutiles ? ou du moins, pourquoi ne nourrissent-elles que des troupeaux de bêtes fauves ? Les hommes aiment-ils toujours mieux végéter toute leur vie sur un sol ingrat, que d’aller chercher au loin des régions fertiles, pour couler dans la paix et l’abondance, au moins la dernière partie de leurs jours ? Mais je me trompe : Il est moins aisé qu’on le pense à l’homme pauvre d’améliorer sa condition, il n’a pas les moyens de se transporter dans les contrées lointaines, où il n’a plus ceux d’y acquérir une propriété, car ces terres incultes, désertes, abandonnées, ne sont pas à quiconque veut s’y établir et les cultiver, elles ont des possesseurs et il faut acheter d’eux le privilège de les rendre fertiles et productives. On ne doit pas, d’ailleurs, se faire illusion, ces contrées parfois si délicieuses ne jouissent pas d’un printemps perpétuel ; elles ont leur hiver et un hiver rigoureux, un froid perçant est

"répandu dans l'atmosphère, une neige épaisse
"couvre la surface du sol, les fleuves glacés ne cou-
"lent plus que pour les poissons, les arbres sont
"dépouillés de leurs feuilles et couverts de verglas, la
"verdure des prés a disparu, les collines et les val-
"lons n'offrent plus qu'une uniforme blancheur, la
"nature a perdu toute sa beauté, et l'homme a assez
"à faire de se mettre à l'abri des injures du temps."

I could thus quote page after page of such fine descriptions of a true literary merit. On the other hand, the book is written in a simplicity of style which recalls that of Defoe, and which may be perused with great interest and pleasure. This volume, which is very rare, was translated into English, and in 1854, a second edition was published in the United States by Mr. Gabriel Franchère himself, who having become a naturalized American citizen, seems to have forgotten that Bibaud was the author of this narrative, for Mr. J. V. Huntingdon, his publisher and translator, praises its good qualities without appearing to realize that the feathers which he places in Franchère's cap really belonged to another.

From 1820 to 1825, the author of this sketch seems to have given himself up exclusively to teaching, still he, no doubt, contributed to the newspapers. At the latter date, he began the publication of the *Bibliothèque Canadienne*, which contains miscellaneous articles on history, science and literature. It is by running over the pages of this compilation that one gets an idea

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of Bibaud's extraordinary knowledge. He successively reveals himself as a botanist, geologist, zoologist, agriculturist, a physicist, mathematician, etc. All the exact sciences were of interest to him, and the reader is astonished at such varied learning, considering the few books available at the time. But what fascinated him above all was Canadian history and education. It is worthy of note, that while, as we know, Joseph François Ferrault, was establishing at Quebec and vicinity, schools for the advancement of education we had Bibaud here. There the father of elementary schools was assisted by the Blanchets, the Bedards, the Taschereaus, while Drs. Labrie, Meilleur, Jacques Viger and a few others were encouraging our historian in his own field, who had just made a reputation for himself by publishing his history of Canada, the first ever written by a French Canadian; that is if we except that of Pierre Boucher, if his work can be designated as such. While engaged in this more serious production, Bibaud embellished his work with verses which he afterwards published in book form in 1830 under the title of "*Épîtres et Satires*" "The most prolific French poet" writes Isidore Lebrun "is Bibaud; his collection, Montreal 1830, contains no less than 172 12mo pages, comprising epistles, satires, odes and songs. These contain pen pictures of usurers, nihilists, religious hypocrites of the female sex and of tiresome orators." "It is just like among our people" Lady Montagu used to say when she came out of the

seraglio where she had noticed the intrigues of its inmates. After expressing such an opinion in his "*Tableau des Canadas*" this French traveller criticized severely, I would say even unjustly, this collection of poems, in the *Revue Encyclopedique* of Paris. Among other pleasant things he says the following about him: "Mr. Bibaud is certainly a good man, a courageous defender of morality; but his ideas sometimes lack coherence, while his style is crude, incorrect and diffusive, showing that he does not always stick to his text. Although he wrote imitations of Horace, was inspired by our (French) classics, and was an admirer of Boileau, yet, however emboldened by the Latin poet, he degenerated into a form of diction and a license not permitted by our poetic art." And, further on, Lebrun states: "To sum up, Mr. Bibaud, before going to press, should have submitted his verses to candid as well as just friends, for undoubtedly Canada is not devoid of learned men of correct taste. He who so successfully edits *L'Observateur Canadien* (a semi-monthly publication), a collection of literature and art, is not his own proper critic; but he is enthusiastic, while it is from patriotism that his talents are inspired. Versifiers in our own *Departments* often publish selections of their poetry which are certainly inferior to those of our Canadian poet."

The author of these lines displays an injustice towards him whom he criticizes, similar to that set forth in his *Tableau* regarding the Canadian clergy.

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Maximilien Bibaud claims that he obtained his information from Messrs Morin and Gosselin, but most assuredly these men never spoke about our clergy as they are represented in this book. Abbé Maguire, in a pamphlet entitled: *Le clergé canadien vengé par ses ennemis, ou observations sur un ouvrage intitulé : Tableau statistique et politique des deux Canadas, par Vindex*, in a masterly manner points out all his errors and false conclusions. Like a number of other Frenchmen, who come to Canada on a flying visit, he assumed the right to judge everything, to criticize everything. Did he ever dream, while writing his book, that twenty-five years before this time, as has been shown by Dr. E. P. Taché, and later by Sir E. P. Taché, author of the celebrated utterance: "The last gun to be fired in America in defense of the British flag will be fired by a French-Canadian," that there were in the country only the two Seminaries of Montreal and Quebec, and further, by the conceptions of our population on classical studies, as well as by the character of these institutions, that they were almost exclusively devoted to the training of ecclesiastics? indeed, apart from the clergy, one might seek in vain through the whole city of Montreal for thirty laymen who, at that time, had received a college education, while on the south shore below Quebec, amongst a population of one hundred thousand, one or two might have been met with." (Address delivered at the Institut Canadien in 1848, "On the development of Phy-

sical force in man," *Repertoire National*, vol. 4, page 363).

School books were at that time so scarce that students were obliged to copy out their tasks before committing them to memory. No, Lebrun did not take into account all the difficulties with which Bibaud must have had to contend, to acquire an education; that there were few men of letters with whom to consult, and that those to whom he could address himself were little if any better fitted than himself. Notice the rather modest way in which he replies to the French writer. After reproducing the article in full in *La Revue Encyclopédique* he adds: "One cannot take offence at a criticism such as we have just read because it cannot be supposed that it is from the pen of an envious person or of an enemy. If I undertake to reply to its author, it is because I believe that he has shown himself somewhat too severe on some points, or that he might have expressed himself somewhat differently." He then replies to each of the criticisms thus made against him by admitting some as well founded and by pointing out the injustice of others. I doubt if the author of *Le Tableau* could have done as well, but that does not prevent him from assuming an air of authority and superiority over the Canadian *littérateur* that nothing can justify.

But let us proceed, for I have dwelt somewhat at length on this incident which, however, is not without interest to us.

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La Bibliothèque Canadienne was replaced by *L'Observateur*, the first number of which appeared on the 10th of July 1830, and the last on the 2nd of July 1831.

Bibaud's son tells us that this publication comprised three volumes. There are, in fact, only two. In the last number of Volume II, the author informs the public that henceforth, in order to meet the wishes of the subscribers, he will return to the former plan of a monthly publication :—*L'Observateur* was published weekly. He goes on to state that : "The first number of the journal to be issued under the old plan, improved as much as possible, will appear on the 1st of September next under the title *Magasin du Bas-Canada*. Despite this promise, the *Magasin du Bas-Canada* did not see the light until the 1st of January 1832, and its publication was only continued until the end of the year. It was at that time, that is to say on the 25th of February 1833, that the author of this Review was appointed by the Government as Clerk of the Haymarket ; a position which he did not long retain. He resigned when it passed from the control of the Crown to that of the City Council. His pride prevented him from retaining the position, although the chief Magistrate of the City, Mr. Jacques Viger, was one of his best friends.

Notwithstanding his continued appeals to the Canadian public, he was obliged to suspend the publication of periodicals for lack of encouragement.

Not content with these appeals, he personally canvassed for subscriptions from Parish to Parish.

This task he did not assume from any sordid motives, but simply to enlighten and instruct his negligent compatriots.

In 1837 he brought together all that had appeared of his History of Canada, in *La Bibliothèque Canadienne*, in *L'Observateur*, and in the *Magasin du Bas-Canada*, and published it as the first Volume of his "History of Canada under the French Régime." In the preface he remarks: "It will be superfluous for me to dilate at any length to prove the usefulness and desirability of the present Volume. Every one should desire to know the history of his Country and nationality, and should love to learn as to who were his ancestors and what they did. We have, it is true, a general history of New France by Père François de Charlevoix, and a history of Canada in English by Mr. (now the Honorable) William Smith; we also have Raynal, and *Les Beautés de l'histoire du Canada*; but Charlevoix's history, which has become rare, even in Canada, and probably will not be reprinted, only comes down to 1725, and, moreover, is filled with minute details, often extraneous to the subject, which renders it tedious and unattractive to most readers. Mr. Smith's work is filled with facts (or rather anecdotes) which appear to be, if not absolutely distorted, at least peculiarly twisted. Raynal, in his *Histoire du Commerce et des Etablissements des Européens dans les deux*

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Indes, recounts only a few isolated features in Canadian history; while the Author of *Les Beautés* of our history, which is principally confined to a description of the manners and customs of the Indians, adds nothing to what is already said on this subject in Charlevoix's voluminous work. As Canadian readers lack a connected, uniform, and complete history of Canada under French rule, we have thought well to confer a favour on our compatriots by supplying such a want. Should this work be well received, as we venture to hope, by the public, it is our intention to follow it up with a history of Canada under English rule, as soon as we can secure the necessary material."

Was this appeal responded to? Well! only partially, for a considerable remainder of this edition was still to be found on sale at one of our booksellers not more than twelve years ago; that is sixty years after its first appearance.

On the 20th of December, 1838, he was appointed Inspector of Weights and Measures, but I am unable to state how long he retained this position. In any case, only four years later, he again took up the publication of his periodicals by issuing *l'Encyclopédie Canadienne*, the first number of which appeared in March 1842, and the last in February 1843.

In the first page of this journal we read as follows: "The need, we almost say the necessity, of a French scientific and literary magazine in this country does not require to be proved; it should be deeply felt as

well as universally recognized. If we were merely to judge by appearances, without at the same time realizing how deceitful they sometimes are, we might be tempted to believe that learning, the taste for Art and the love of Science and Letters, are almost unknown among Canadians of French origin, and that, in this respect, they stand infinitely below those who speak English.

In fact ? while Canadians of British birth or extraction have, apart from a large number of political sheets, several journals devoted solely to the promotion of Art, Literature and Science; not a single one, of this latter class is published in French, or at least not one that does not confine itself to simple extracts or to a particular kind of literature. A journal comprising mainly original (Canadian) or at least new matter on the different branches of science and literature; or items having close connection with past or current events of our country, has been a long felt want and is still called for to day. It is to supply this deficiency—to relieve this need that this enterprise has been started, and it has been started with the resolution that the plan on which it will be conducted will conform to the title which it has received. Part of the articles with which it is to be filled will be drawn from Canadian history and biography while others will deal with the topography, the geology, the botany and the zoology of this country and the neighbouring states."

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In October, 1842, on his return from a visit to Quebec, he was asked : what appeared to him most interesting in the Ancient Capital ? Knowing the love, for the study of the history of his own Country, shown by him who had just published the first Volume of that history, we should have been led to have expected that he would have told us that it was the battle fields where was played the role which settled the glorious destiny of Canada—the Plains of Abraham, and of Ste. Foye and the monuments of the brave men who immortalized these historic places ; but such were not his thoughts. Let us listen to what he has to say. “For at least twelve years I had not set foot in our ancient Capital. On my return some one asked me what things I had found to be most interesting there. ? To that question I said I will reply in writing. But, before giving the answer, permit me to express a few words that have no bearing on the question.

Of course I found at Quebec that which is always to be found there ; probably the most unique site in the world, where appears an infinite variety of always enchanting views, of wide plateau, mountain roads, high promontaries, a great island of varied and picturesque cities, and our beautiful St. Lawrence which seems to bifurcate and trifurcate into different streams, and for the fuller pleasure of the spectator, to be again enlarged by the wide mouthed St. Charles, and by the flow of the Montmorancy and the Chaudiere from opposite directions. Is it

surprising that Cartier and his companions were so enchanted, and expressed such extacy, when passing between the promontaries of Quebec and Levis ? In the fore ground, as well as in the distance, numerous villages, with their picturesque churches, afford a charming sight, which is heightened by the summers haze."

He thus continues to express himself, gliding on from topographic to architecture, to nature, to art when he pauses for a moment to say a word about "*le Chien d'Or*", which, while resting, continues to gnaw his bone", and then adds :

"To pass from the physical to the moral, or from the material to the mental, I may say that I noticed with satisfaction the numerous pupils of the Seminary dressed, but without the *sache*, in the same uniform of my happy college days, a uniform consisting of the blue *rattin*, or cloth coat, with white stripes, or rather seams, and the many coloured *sache*, which pleased me so much when a student, appeared to be one of the great joys, even blessings, of life." Then he alludes to the amiable and affable manners of its noteworthy citizens, and, in a word, of their true French politeness. "But as I seem to be speaking of things known to all I will now proceed to my answer."

"The most curious things I saw, or at least the most interesting to me, during my short sojourn at Quebec, were : 1st. The residence, etc., of Mr. J. F. Perrault ; 2nd. Mr. Charles Dion's school ; 3rd. Mr. Antoine Plamondon's studio,

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"I had scarcely more than landed, from the steamer, at Quebec, on the 13th instant, and taken up my lodgings, when I turned my steps towards the residence of the venerable J. F. Perrault, Esquire, which is situated beyond St. Louis suburb on the classic, or at least the historic road of Canada, from Quebec to Sainte-Foye. I was on the way to see a man known throughout the country as the author of numerous fine works, by his achievements, and by his public benevolences. And as I entered his home, I recalled this line of a Canadian poet, or rather one who wrote in Canada : 'There I saw the happy man who preaches by example.'

"Mr. Perrault does, indeed, by example, preach virtue, home and field industry, love of study, love of work, zeal for the public welfare, good will and good deeds, patriotism and good citizenship, in a word, in the most favorable light that can be given to these expressions. Mr. Perrault, although he has reached the age of ninety, has lost nothing of his love for work ; he still writes, having the rare fortune, for one of his years, of being able to do it at night as well as in the day time, without having to use spectacles.

"On my return from my walk beyond the walls, of which I have already spoken, I passed the home of Mr Charles Dion, teacher, in St. Roch suburb. He showed me his school and his scholars. I never imagined the number, the good order and decorum of these children, all, or nearly all, having interesting faces, evidently animated with the desire to learn

and the purpose to do that which is right. In a gathering of over a hundred children, I noticed less restlessness, heard less noise, even during the absence of their teacher, than I have witnessed elsewhere in classes of thirty or forty. The good order, regularity, and silence when it is ordered, which prevails in this large school, cannot but be extremely gratifying to friends of education who witness it"..... etc.

Then he describes the studio of Mr Plamondon, one of our most noted artists, and regrets that unpropitious weather prevented his visiting those of Messrs Légaré and Hamel.

While the beautiful sights of Quebec were to him always most enchanting, that which pleased him most, which interested him the more, was the primary school system of the founder of the Ancient Capital.

With what fond feelings he speaks of what he calls the "scholar's coat" which he so enjoyed wearing when a boy (note that at this time, he was nearly sixty). Thus he was interested in children attending the school or seminary, for above all things he was an educator. Read his works and you will find at almost every page his dissertations on education and the need for extending it by every possible means among the people. The good he has done to this province in this respect is worthy of the highest praise.

After the publication of l'*Encyclopédie*, he worked at his History of Canada, and published in 1843 a

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second edition of the first volume, issued in 1837, revised, corrected and enlarged. This was followed in 1844 by his *History of Canada and the Canadians under English rule up to 1830*.

A third volume had been prepared, but he refrained from publishing it during his lifetime. Was it his estimation of the events of 1837 that caused him to hesitate so long and finally to abandon its publication? Perhaps, because the spirit of those days had not yet been tranquilized. The patriots would not have pardoned his criticism of their conduct. And even in 1878, when his son, Dr. J. G. Bibaud, published this third volume, his friends most bitterly reproached him about it. Nevertheless, if the councils and warnings of his father had been listened to, what disasters would have been avoided and what sorrows and tears saved. How many men, who did not then agree with him, have today come to accept his opinions.

After the publication of his *History*, Bibaud did not cause anything further to be printed, or rather that which he did publish appeared under another name. When Sir William Logan, our learned Canadian geologist, wished to have his reports translated into French he entrusted the work to him, as he could find no one in the country better qualified. His scientific studies had most eminently qualified him for this kind of work. These translations were so admirably done that they are as rare and as much sought after as the original English reports themselves.

To these diverse attainments were joined others, equally attractive, in the home life, and the reader will scan with pleasure what his daughter, Made-moiselle Bibaud, his only surviving child, thus expresses :

“ My father in his private life was rather retiring and appeared to be satisfied with what ardent work came to his hand—we always saw him writing. He provided generously for the wants of his family, and took a deep interest in the education of his children, carefully read over the books that were placed in our hands, and if one of us ever read a book that did not meet with his approval, he severely reprimanded him. He was always kind and loving to us, but as he had a serious and distant aspect we never became closely intimate with him, so that a word from him was all that was needed to call us to order ; however, when at dusk he rested from work, awaiting the evening meal, he called us to his side, and told us stories, and sang to us. These were happy moments for us.

“ My father was slightly under medium height, well built, with a dignified bearing, a kindly look and a pleasant smile, and was polite and agreeable to every one.

“ Although he was in touch with all the eminent men of the country, and all learned strangers came to call on him, he seldom went out, yet from time to time he took a hand in a game of cards with his friends, whist being his favourite game.

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"He saw many members of the leading families, and besides had many friends who often came for a chat with him, among others were Messrs. Duchesnay, John McDonnell, Judge Vallières, and especially Jacques Viger, who was his most intimate friend.

"Scarcely a week went by that the latter did not come to spend one or two evenings at our house. The discussion between them was often lively; Mr. Viger defending his opinions so strongly that often his loud words struck our ears, but my father on the other hand argued coolly, and never lost his temper, while still holding finally to his opinions.

"He also had dealings with Mr. Fabre, who imported for him the books he wanted, with Ludger Duvernay, and Mr. Laviolette, who assisted him in publishing *l'Ami du Peuple*.

"Michel Bibaud's character was of the strictest probity, and he treated others as if like him in this respect. He was easy in his dealings. When he was told by a debtor that he could not make immediate payment, my father waited patiently his good time; in fact many took advantage of his good faith. A certain Mr. Pasteur, for whom he had long worked, left the country without paying three hundred dollars owing to him.

"When the Inspectorship of Weights and Measures and Hay-market became vacant, his friends interested themselves to secure it for him. After strong persuasions by them, (he would never have thought of

it himself) he decided to make the application, when he at once secured the position.

"This was an important and lucrative appointment. His commission from the King gave him the title of Esquire, which was not at that time as common place as it is to-day. He retained this post several years, which gave him more leisure and the means to send three of his sons to college—the eldest did not have this advantage on account of lack of means. At the same time he saved enough money to buy a lot at Côte des Neiges, his birthplace.

"When the control of all local appointments passed into the hands of the municipal authorities his position was no longer the same, from master he was reduced to the condition of a mere servant, and being too proud to accept such a condition he resigned to again take up his pen.

"He had already published the History of Canada under the French Regime, and part of that under the English Regime. The times were then so turbulent that he left the last part in manuscript which was published by his son, Dr Bibaud, in 1878.

"He took no part in the rising of 1837, although he found fault with abuses of power and several unwarrantable acts of the Government, nevertheless he was opposed to open resistance and desired that the difficulties should have been settled by conciliation without recourse to arms. It was at this time that he was appointed a magistrate.

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"When the question of the Union of Upper and Lower Canada came up, my father wrote against this measure, because he considered it prejudicial to his Province. He was tendered a dinner in honour of the verses he published regarding it.

"Mr. Logan entrusted him with the translation of his *Geology of Canada*: this interested him very much; but his eyesight having become affected, he had to give up his work. He also translated Greek and Hebrew.

"My father's favorite reading was the Greek and Latin classics, of which he was very fond.

"One day, his son Gaspard, then a student at the Montreal College, being in need of money, took a book which he considered to be of little importance. When my father learned of this, he exclaimed with surprise and regret: What, you have sold my Pythagoras? This was the sole reproach he made to him.

"He had the misfortune to lose his youngest son, a boy most amiable in character and of exceptional ability; his joy and hope. He died at the age of thirteen, knowing Homer and Fenelon, while he wrote verses with remarkable ease. After this loss, my father became sad and despondent and no longer smiled. One day when we had forgotten ourselves, he repeated to us the words of Madam Letitia Bonaparte: 'One does not laugh in the home of the Emperor's Mother.'

"Stricken with paralysis, he continued to live without the use of his limbs for eighteen months, but

he preserved all his mental faculties unto the end. Mr. Mercier, then Priest at Notre Dame, often visited him during his illness, and was present with him when he died. He passed away in July, 1857, at the house of his son, Dr. Bibaud.

"One noticeable peculiarity about my Father was that he always wrote with his room door open, and that, no matter how great the noise going on in the house, it never disturbed him; as he did not seem to hear it, but, strange to say, if one of us made use of an improper expression he corrected us, even if we were in a different room, without, apparently, any interruption to his work."

Her father, she tells us, died on the 3rd July, 1857, aged seventy five years, five months and thirteen days.

All the newspapers of the country noticed his death, with appreciative comments on his works, a few selections from which give us some idea of the estimation in which he was held.

Le Pays, (Canadian, National et Libéral:)

After a short biographical sketch and a list of his works goes on to say :

"He has always been a laborious writer, an indefatigable fighter, one, rarely to be found, who sacrificed everything for the love of art. Like many others he was unable to climb the ladder of power or to kiss fickle fortune. But he preferred an honest life and his liberty. Our political opinions and those

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of Mr. Bibaud were not the same. Still, we admire his independence, and we take pleasure in quoting, with approval, his democratic principles. We trust all the press will join his numerous friends in accompanying his remains to their last resting place."

Le Journal de Québec :

"Mr. Bibaud was an indefatigable searcher, a laborious writer and a patriot whose heart was filled with noble sentiments. He has rendered signal services to future historians of his country, and his fellow-countrymen owe him deep and lasting gratitude."

La Gazette de Sorel :

"In 1813, this distinguished patriot made his debut in journalism and continued to write from that time on...

He also wrote a History of Canada and various other works, and was still engaged in his useful work, when death, ever relentless for the good as for the evil, carried off our distinguished countryman. Mr. Bibaud was certainly a representative Canadian, who laid down his life with the consolation of having been useful to his country, and his fellow-citizens should hold him in lasting remembrance. Should we not raise a worthy monument to our estimable departed citizen ?"

Courrier du Canada :

"Every one knows how much we owe to the historical works of Mr. Bibaud, whose memory is revealed in his various publications."

Chronicle & Transcript :

"Having left college, Mr. Bibaud embraced the profession of the press. Like many others of his countrymen, he laboured hard in defence of Canadian nationality and for the conservation of the French language. Chateaubriand speaks of the French in America as a doomed race, destined to dwindle away like the aborigines with whom they have intermingled and sympathised. If this be a true prediction, certainly the French Canadians are themselves the last to realize it. They, however, feel that their nationality, and even their language need constant efforts to preserve them in the position they now occupy...

He is discribed as having been always a laborious writer, and indeed the number of his works prove that he must have been so. We are told that it would have been easy for him to rise to power, but that he preferred an honest ease and liberty."

Le Journal de l'Instruction Publique :

After giving a consecutive list of his various periodicals, this paper goes on to state that :

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"The aims of these various journals were literary and scientific rather than political, and, no doubt, he found it very difficult to edit and publish them with the little encouragement such publications received at that time. In 1829 (1830) Mr. Bibaud published a collection of poems entitled : *Épîtres et Satires*, of which Mr. Lebrun makes favourable mention in his *Tableau des Deux Canadas*. Later, he issued, besides a number of elementary text books, a History of Canada in two volumes. These two works are the first of their kind ever published in this country. And we believe that *Épîtres, Satires, Etc.*, is, as yet, the only volume of Canadian poetry we have.

"Many of our writers have tried writing verses, and among the pieces given in Mr. Huston's *Repertoire National* are some of undoubted merit, but no other French Canadian has ever published a volume of poetry entirely of his own composition. The various literary collections of Mr. Bibaud have become very rare, and some of them are much sought after by bibliophiles because of the historical documents they contain. At the time of his death our laborious countryman was at work on a translation of Sir William E. Logan's Geological Reports."

Journal of Education :

"A man who may be called the pioneer of Canadian literature, Michel Bibaud, died at Montreal at the age of 75. He published the first History of

Canada and the first volume of poetry written by a French Canadian."

Does not the citing of these various notices proclaim a lasting reproach against French Canadians ? As a benefactor of his race, a man who sacrificed his whole life for the elevation and progress of his countrymen, a clear and disinterested councillor, an indefatigable fighter, whose works have for their sole object the development and instruction of his own people, he should not be consigned to the oblivion where his memory has so long remained. It is fifty years, on the 3rd of July last, since his body was laid to rest close by his birthplace, at Cote des Neiges. Would it it not be well, then, to celebrate this fiftieth anniversary by stirring up a feeling of acknowledgement and gratitude which should result in raising such a monument to him as was referred to at the time of his death ? It is noble for a people to make amends for their faults, and happy are they when they honour their truly great men.



