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PAPER I.—NOTES OF A JOURNEY THROUGH THE INTERIOR OF THE SAGUENAY COUNTRY.

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It may appear paradoxical to say that the interior of the Saguenay country was better known two hundred years ago than it is now ; but such appears to be the fact. The Jesuit missionaries seem to have traversed every part of this vast region, lying to the North-west of the lower St. Lawrence. In 1647, Father Jean Duquen, missionary at Tadousac, ascending the Saguenay, discovered the Lake St. John, and noted its Indian name, Picouagami or Flat Lake. He was the first European who beheld that magnificent expanse of inland water. In 1661, Pierre Bailliquet, also a missionary, entered the Labrador country in rear of Mingan. In the same year, on the 1st of June, the Fathers Gabriel Drueillet and Claude Dablon left Tadousac, journeying towards the North-west, or Mer du Nord, and reached Nekouba, called in their narrative "le milieu des deux mers, de celle du Nord et de celle de Tadousac." The latitude was determined to be 49° 20', and the longitude 305° 10' or 54° 50' W. of Ferro. This Nekouba is spoken of as a place of some importance, being the site of an annual fair, to which the Indians came from far and near. The soil receives but scant praise : the mosquitoes, it appears, are starved out for want of

nourishment. "C'est ici un sol aride et sabloneux ; nous
 "trouvons vrai ce que nous disoient nos sauvages, que quand
 "nous serions parvenus icy, nous aurions passé le pais des
 "Maringoins, des Mousquites ou Cousins, qui n'y trouvent
 "pas de quoy vivre. C'est l'unique bien de ces deserts, de
 "ne pouvoir pas même nourrir ces petites bestioles, fort
 "importunes aux hommes." Finally, during the summer
 of the year 1672, the P. Charles Albanel, passing by the route
 of Lake St. John, the Chomouchnan, and the great Mistassini
 Lake, succeeded in reaching the edge of the Mer du Nord,
 and saw the British flag flying on the shore of Hudson's Bay.
 And these were but a few of many. In every direction, up
 every stream and water-course, in the face of all difficulties,
 the cross was carried by hands that never tired, with unwearied
 zeal and most patient suffering, through all the slow
 martyrdom of their thorny path, in heat and cold, through
 snow and marsh ; consorting with savages and housing with
 filth, and misery, and famine, these brave men persevered to
 the end, content to suffer all things, if only they might save a
 soul alive. And who, in view of such deeds, will not say
 that Canada also has had its heroic age, its warriors of the
 cross, its saints and martyrs, and that side by side with the
 martyrologium and Acta Sanctorum of the old world, we may
 place without fear our "Relations des Jésuites," the simple
 and pathetic narrative of the Jesuit Fathers ?

We have fallen on altered times. Only occasionally, and
 then "*haud passitus æquis*," do we tread in the footprints of a
 bygone age. It is but a few years since an attempt was
 made to reach the Labrador coast by following Arnauld's route
 up the River Moisie. The projector was a noted tourist and
 writer of travels. The expedition was an entire failure. The
 dread of starvation lay like a lion in the path : and the whole
 party, though backed with all the improvements of modern
 travel, turned back in alarm, before even reaching the height
 of land.

Two centuries have passed away since these ancient
 worthies lived and travelled and wrote. From lapse of

time and the mutable fortunes of the colony, their discoveries have for the most part gradually faded into oblivion. It must be borne in mind that the French king had reserved the Saguenay Territory as part of the domain; its fishing and hunting grounds being at that time considered the best in North America. In the royal leases, this territory extended from Ile-aux-Coudres to the River Moisy, two leagues beyond the Bay of Seven Islands; and in depth inland, it included all the lakes and rivers which fall into the Lake St. John and the Saguenay, comprising the ports of Tadousac, Chicoutimi, Lake St. John, Nekouba, Mistassinoc, Papinachois, and Naskapis. The first lease dated as far back as 1658, and was granted to Sieur Demaure under an *arrêt* of the Superior Council of Quebec. The order of the State Council, passed in 1677,—that this territory should be carefully explored, and laid down on a map,—was only carried out in 1733. It was from this map that Charlevoix published his own chart, eleven years later; and it needs only a cursory glance at this latter, to convince oneself, as the late Mr. Andrew Stuart remarks, that the Saguenay was at that time better known than the interior of the country between Quebec and Montreal.

When the Red Cross replaced the Lilies, the vast interior fell into the hands of other powerful and exclusive trading companies, and became a terra incognita, a land of hobgoblins and chimeras dire, where ingress was always discountenanced and often forbidden. By degrees, the few traces of civilization disappeared; the voice of the missionary was heard at rare intervals; the quiet homestead, the cornfield and the garden, which the patient industry of the Jesuits had reclaimed from the wilderness, returned again to the dank vegetation of the forest. The dust gathered around their records, and their voices at length waxed faint and unreal as the utterances of a fairy tale. And thus the world in which they lived and moved and acted has become to us as a drama of the past. The lava and scorixæ have hardened over it, as over the Ausonian cities of old; and now that it has been exhumed, it still seems to remain apart and far-removed from

our own sphere of activity, and we stand admiring and astonished, as at the recovery of a lost world. Who can verify the position of all the lakes and rivers and routes of travel, of which these memoirs make mention? Where was situate that golden land of which the Père Albanel writes,—a land of patriarchal trees, of luxuriant meadows and broad plains of richest vegetation? Where lay the site of that great fair of nations, mentioned by Drueillet and Dablon, a counterpart apparently of those mediæval fairs in Sarmatia, where the tribes of Europe and Asia met in peaceful intercourse for trade and barter? We cannot tell. We are powerless to restore the actuality of these wondrous stories. They resemble an old Etruscan inscription; the characters are there; we know the letters; we can pronounce the words; but the key to their solution is still wanting.

Nor can we regard this as a solitary instance of a large tract of country being for a lengthened period cut off from the rest of the world and again restored. There are other lands whose existence has for a time faded into the back ground, or been altogether ignored. The Canary Islands, the *Insulæ Fortunatæ* of the ancients, were explored by that Juba, king of Numidia, of whose voyages an exact account has been given by the elder Pliny. For above a thousand years they seem to have remained unnoticed and unknown: their modern history commences with their accidental re-discovery by a French vessel shipwrecked on the coast in the year 1330. The fate of the old Norwegian colony in Greenland is not less singular. Established in the ninth century of our era, it grew in a short time to 12 parishes, 190 villages, a bishop's see, and 2 convents, under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Drontheim. From accidental causes the communication subsequently ceased, and the Norse settlement in Greenland became unknown to Europe for several centuries, until in 1587 it was re-discovered, and the Danes again established a connexion with the lost colony. So also the interior of North Africa was much better known in the days of Leo Africanus than at present, and his work "*De Totius Africæ Descriptione*,"

a minute account of the tribes and topography of the Sahara, remains to shew us how much we have lost and how much we have yet to recover.

But however defective our present knowledge of the interior of the Saguenay country, there has been for the last half century a constantly increasing curiosity as to the capabilities and physical conditions of that interesting region. In the year 1827, an Act passed the provincial parliament, intituled "An Act to appropriate a certain sum of money therein mentioned for exploring the tract of country to the North of the River and Gulf of St. Lawrence, commonly called the King's Posts, and the lands adjacent thereto." In pursuance of this Act, Commissioners were appointed, and drew up a scheme of survey. Three expeditions were organized. One party under Mr. Bouchette, ascended the River St. Maurice to the mouth of the River La Tuque, a distance of fifty leagues, ascended the latter river to its sources, and crossing over the head waters of the Batiscan entered into the waters in their neighbourhood, which empty themselves into Lake St. John, at a point at about four leagues above the Post of Metabetchuan, the old Jesuit establishment upon that Lake. Mr. Proulx, with a second party, was instructed to explore the lands lying upon the Ha-ha Bay and between it and Chicoutimi, and having completed this survey he was directed to cross the River Saguenay at Chicoutimi, and penetrate into the interior, on the opposite side, by the River des Terres Rompues. A third party was placed under the direction of Mr. Hamel, who explored the peninsula between the outlet of Lake St. John, on the one side, and the River Chicoutimi on the other. The survey of the Lake itself and its tributary streams was divided among them. The value of these Reports is greatly enhanced by the scientific researches of Capt. Baddeley of the Royal Engineers, who paid special attention to the geology of the exploration. In their concluding Report the Commissioners observe that there appears to be sufficient evidence "to demonstrate that this tract of territory could afford habitation and subsistence to

“ a large population, and that there is a vast extent of cultivable land about Lake St. John, the Saguenay, and the waters connecting them, upon which it would be desirable to effect settlements.” They go on then to remark that “ the climate of Chicoutimi and lower down the Saguenay seems to be much like that at Quebec, whilst it would appear that about Lake St. John, the climate is as mild as that of Montreal, perhaps milder.”

Perhaps the exceptional character of the climate of Lake St. John is best shewn by the fact of its being a wheat-growing district. On the North shore of the St. Lawrence no wheat will thrive East of Cape Tourment. It is known that this cereal is of wide climatological range, but is singularly affected by slight differences of heat and humidity. In England, whenever the mean temperature of July and August is below 60° of Fahrenheit, the crop is deficient. On this continent, according to the Canada Year Book, it seems to require for at least two months a mean of 65°.

But the great drawback to this fine tract of land has hitherto been its seclusion, its remoteness, its want of facile communication with the more ancient settlements. The great problem to be resolved, and towards which every effort should be directed, is to give it an outlet for its produce, and a greater accessibility from the older lines of travel. It was therefore with feelings of no ordinary satisfaction that while engaged in 1863, in the inspection of certain Crown Land surveys in the neighbourhood of Bagotsville, I received instructions from the Department to traverse on my return the interior country lying between Ha-ha Bay and St. Urbain, including also a digression to the Grand Ha-ha Lake. The season was propitious. The weather was magnificent. I was fortunate too in securing the assistance of an experienced guide, Desiré Côté of St. Alphonse, who procured for me a good horse, sure-footed as a mule, and possessed of all the necessary qualifications for going over a rough and stony country.

Starting, therefore, on the 23rd July, I arrived before evening at Louis Fournier's camp on the Lac à la Belle Truite, a distance of not more than seven leagues. The ground here, after the first steep rise near the bay, was tolerably level and presented few features of interest; the timber being small and of second growth; spruce prevailing, associated with sapin, yellow pine, white birch and cedar. We killed several wild pigeons with a horse-pistol, a most useful implement, by the way, in an excursion of this kind, when whatever game you stumble on is generally close at hand, and the range consequently short. The arm we used was of an ancient pattern; had a barrel of nearly eighteen inches in length; and carried about half an ounce of powder with a large handful of shot. The explosion was alarmingly fine, but I preferred allowing the guide to use it. Fournier's camp, as it is called, is simply a species of log cabin, having under the same roof accommodation for travellers, and stabling for horses; so that the horse and his rider sleep within hearing of each other, and "thin partitions do their bounds divide." I kept in the open air as much as possible, and in the evening went out with a son of my host, on the lake. I threw four flies at a cast, and every fly was almost instantaneously taken. The lake is evidently swarming with trout, and of remarkably fine quality, the flesh reddish or salmon-colored and delicious in flavor. After smoking a pipe with my host in front of his humble dwelling, and watching the slowly-moving constellations, the "*taciturna noctis signa*," till far into the night, I wrapped my blanket about me with much internal satisfaction, and so drifted gently into obliviousness. The next two days were employed in diverging due West to the River Ha-ha, and thence to the Grand Lake. On the morning of the 24th, leaving our horses at Fournier's, we commenced to scale the high land to the westward, the ground rising throughout, till we struck the river; found poor stony soil in general, yellow sandy loam, with cypress, pine, white birch and epinette; rocky hills of limited extent with small swamps between. Crossing the river, and scaling it upwards along the left bank, we found the same timber mixed with

poplar swampy hollows and tangled vegetation. Rain threatening, we camped early, covering the camp with spruce and birch bark. Next morning, the rain having ceased, we started for the discharge of the Grand Lake, and about 7 a.m. struck the Ha-ha River at the Great Rapid, not far from the outlet. Having crossed the river with some difficulty at the head of the rapid, we stood at length, at 8½ a.m., on the shore of the Grand Lake. The view was inexpressibly fine. Looking southwards and lengthwise along this magnificent sheet of water, the mountains of the County of Charlevoix were distinctly visible. All around was rolling and mountainous land. One small island, green and leafy with foliage, lay like a gem on the lake's mirror-like surface. Not a breath of wind was stirring; nor was there a sound to be heard save the screaming of a solitary loon, or *huurd*, which flew over our heads and seemed to increase the lonely impressiveness of the scene. The upper end of the lake was beyond our view, but as its shores faded in the distance, we could see here and there several bold promontories projecting into the water, with the wild fowl swooping round their pine-covered summits. There we halted for an hour; made a fire, and having recruited our exhausted energies, started for Fournier's in a North-east direction. The ground was most uneven and fatiguing to traverse; a succession of parallel ridges and hollows: the longitudinal axis of these appearing to bear nearly east and west: these rocky hills, with their scant vegetation and regular swell, seemed almost to resemble the billows of a great sea which the rod of some resistless power had touched and stiffened in a moment into stone. On the highest of one of these hills, the absence of trees permitted us to see all round for many miles. The elevation must have been very great. The country seemed spread out like a map beneath us. The lakes in the vicinity, with the streams and their coupes or valleys were easy to be identified. We reached the lower end of Belle Truite Lake before dark, and blowing the conch-shell placed there, the signal was heard at Fournier's, though over a mile distant, and a canoe came to fetch us across. The heat all day was

terrific, with frequent thunder-showers. On the 27th, Monday, we resumed our journey along the road track towards St. Urbain.

Our course lay nearly due South. On approaching the smaller Lake Ha-ha, at about six miles from Fournier's, an enormous mountain rose on our right, between the Lake and the road. As we advanced, it seemed to grow upon us, till at length it towered up some two thousand feet above our heads, presenting to us a bare, flat, wall-like, almost perpendicular face, with narrow terraces covered with birch and pine, crossing it in dark stripes from side to side. The pines at its base stood from sixty to a hundred feet high; at its summit they were hardly to be distinguished. We involuntarily halted for a moment. We seemed to be passing the portals of the habitable world. That great mass of granite appeared no unworthy limit to divide the known from the unknown. Hitherto our way had lain in great part among men and their habitations; we were now to lose these for a time. In the sublime *Lusiad* of Camoens, the navigator who first doubled the Southern Cape of Africa is feigned to be met by an awful shape, the genius of the undiscovered ocean, who bars his passage and inquires his purpose. In the intense loneliness of the place, I half fancied the possibility of a like incident, and almost expected that the "genius loci," the tutelary guardian of the wilderness beyond, would startle us with a similar apparition.

The track which we now entered on was one which seemed to have been traced through the mountainous country with admirable dexterity. I believe that the late Mr. J. Bte. Duberger, of St. Paul's Bay, was one of the first to explore it. Several times it seemed to me, engulfed as we were among mountains, a most difficult problem to say how we were to get out; yet, thanks to our unfailling clue, the thread-like road-track, we always *did* emerge; some small opening appeared, widened, gave us egress, and again the hills closed in on every side as before. I think it is that ancient worthy Seneca, who, in his *Treatise de Constantiâ Sapientis*,

speaking of the arduous paths by which the true philosopher has to ascend, says that even these are not so difficult as they appear at a distance, and compares them to those mountain ranges which, as seen from afar, when the eye is deceived by their remoteness, appear connected and impassable ; but to those who approach them, they open out by degrees and shew an easy and accessible passage. It would be hard to find a more apt illustration of the text than this part of our route.

Yet it was not all bare mountain-land. At about nine leagues from Grand Bay there was a charming patch of prairie or meadow-land. The long grass waved pleasantly and thousands of small wild-flowers blossomed in the shade ; a mile farther on, we stumbled on rather a startling memento, the skeleton of a horse ; perhaps fatigue, or a broken leg had brought the poor brute to an untimely end. My own steed was all that could be desired ; walking leisurely and with wonderful sagacity, never stumbling, and feeling with extended fore-foot every inch of doubtful or dangerous road. The guide marched stoutly on before, as if blessed with limbs of iron and muscles of steel, never tiring and never at a loss. Now and then our patience was somewhat tried, as in *Mollières*, or soft places,—*Vasières* or mud-holes, where, spite of everything, the horse *would* go in, almost to his girths, —or in spots encumbered by roots of trees, where a dislocated joint seemed almost inevitable. But these were exceptions, and in the main this part of the journey was an intoxication of delight, which those will understand who have been on horseback in a hilly country when the sun shines and the breeze blows, and all seems fresh and unfaded as in the very morning of creation. But as the hours wore on, the light breeze fell by degrees. The carpet of green grass disappeared. We were entering on a stony hollow. The bare granite hills closed in, as a wall, to right and left ; the air was heavy and motionless ; the heat became oppressive. A few crickets chirped ; but even these seemed to give in at last, and the silence remained unbroken. The rocks glowed with the intense sunshine, and the dwarfed vegetation gave no promise

of a shade ; in so sultry an atmosphere, everything seemed to simmer and quiver around. The relief was intense, when at length the pass widened, a small lake appeared on our right, and the hills about us wore a less desolate aspect. About half a league past this small sheet of water,—which the guide called the Little Ha-ha Lake,—we came opposite to one of the most interesting objects of the whole route,—a huge eminence known as the Half-way Mountain, standing to the west of our track and at some six furlongs distance. Its appearance was most striking ; pre-eminent and alone in its altitude of some three thousand feet, and nearly pyramidal in figure, a wedge of red sienite, a land-mark such as a Titan might have planted, it shut out the afternoon sun with its grand proportions.

For long it remained by us on our right, a sublime and awful presence, and we, toiling laboriously round its base, seemed dwarfed to absolute nothingness before the calm serenity of this majestic vision. Yet it passed at length ; receded ; and was left behind. Another stony pass awaited us, and this overcome, we entered on a *brulé*, or grove of burnt timber, the very picture of gloomy desolation. A more melancholy or funereal scene than these black and charred stumps, with the tall weeds between, nodding like plumes on a bier, can scarcely be imagined. Hastening through it we halted by a small stream, cooked our game, threw ourselves on the sward, and rested for an hour. Rising then with recruited strength after our repast, we came almost immediately on a singular pavement, or paved way of circular flattened stones, thoroughly water-worn and smooth, but without a particle of earth about them. I have seen a similar mass of stone on the Rigaud mountain, between the Ottawa and St. Lawrence. There it covers several acres, and is called the ‘*place à guéret*,’ or ploughed field, from its quasi-furrowed appearance. The travelling here was most irksome and not a little dangerous. Passing onward we crossed a small stream falling into the Malbay River, and shortly afterwards found ourselves at the foot of Côte à la Cruche. This Côte is a long rising slope of

about three miles, lasting to the valley of the Malbay River. The rise seems interminable. Midway on it is another ridge of round stones, entirely bare of earth, similar to that already noted.

By the time the Malbay River was reached, the sun was near its setting, and the shadows of the gloaming time already lay on the valleys and low grounds. We crossed the river with some difficulty on a species of raft, with the aid of a rope. The log-hut which used to stand here, and which would have been an excellent resting place, had unfortunately been destroyed by fire some time previously, together with a lot of red spruce logs intended for a bridge. There was no course left us, therefore, but to continue our route by night and push onward to Paul Duchesne's cabane, at Lac à la Galette, the next stopping place. The ground we now traversed seemed much more level than on the north of the river. The valleys were more spacious and the hills were removed to a greater distance. The soil also was much less stony. A thick unctuous clay appeared in many places to overlie a substratum of sand. The timber was in general larger, and the vegetation more abundant. This improved condition continued, with few exceptions, for the next two hours of travel ; and I suppose our rate of going scarcely exceeded three miles an hour. We floundered through some most profound mud-holes, and I began to feel somewhat benumbed and stiff from being so long in the saddle, but these minor inconveniences were scarcely thought of in the novelty and strangeness of the scene. The moon was near the full ; the sky almost cloudless ; the night seemed bright as day. I was alone, for the guide was out of sight, and letting the bridle fall carelessly from my hand, I willingly surrendered myself to the weird influences of the hour, with all the luxurious dreaminess inspired by the intense stillness of the interminable forest ; and watched as in a reverie the fantastic shapes assumed by the crags and branches, and all the grotesque appearances that glimmered, here and there, in the hazy splendor of a light that seemed to reveal so much and yet left so much to the imagination. I

thought of the night so solemnly pictured in the opening of the *Ephigenia* in Aulis, of Faust and his midnight journey through the air to the witches' festival on the Brocken, and of those fine lines of poor Nat Lee, the madman :

“ With a heart of furious fancies
Whereof I am commander ;
With a horse of air, and a spear of fire,
To the wilderness I wander.
With a knight of ghosts and shadows
I summoned am to journey,
Ten leagues beyond the wide-world's end ;
Methinks it is no journey !”

But all this was soon over. About a league before getting to Lac à la Galette, the travelling is again very rough and uneven, and dreaming is here out of the question, unless at the hazard of a fall. We arrived at Paul's about midnight, were most kindly received, and retired to rest in a room which seemed an odd compromise between civilisation and barbarism ; the walls being neatly papered, and the beds being of spruce boughs.

Next morning, while preparing for a start, our worthy host entertained us with some account of himself and his adventures. I believe he still lives ; and, possibly, to many in Quebec his name is not unfamiliar. Paul, I found, was a notable hunter, and acquainted with many of our leading sporting characters. He spoke in high terms of a certain well-known Quebecker, resident in the vicinity of Pointe à Piscault, whom he considered an unfailing shot at deer within 120 yards : he once saw him bring down five cariboux in immediate succession with a revolver. “ Enfin,” he concluded, with emphasis, “ c'est mon maître.” On the other hand, he anathematised with intense disgust the conduct of a certain party of novices, who, though armed to the teeth, fairly turned and ran off when a cross old she-bear approached, leaving him alone to try conclusions, with only a knife and tomahawk. However, Paul, nothing daunted, prepared for

the fray, and would most probably have made a good fight of it, but the bear, after a moment's pause, faced about and went off. He pointed out to me a ridge to the west, where the cariboux were generally to be found, the original preferring the "bois vert,"—and another to the east which was "fameux pour les ours," as if each animal had its peculiar habitat. His wife was an Indian half-breed, and his children had all of them a decided Tartar physiognomy. He, himself, was a well-knit, light-limbed man, of middle height, and remarkably active and intelligent.

On the morning of the 28th, the fifth day after leaving Grand Bay, we prepared for our last day's travel, being now within six leagues of St. Urbain. When about a league from Lac à la Galette, the guide pointed out, to the right, the valley containing the head-waters of the River Ste. Anne, which falls into the St. Lawrence a few miles below Château Richer. The ground all round us was in general level, and the plains wide and spacious. Another league brought us to the celebrated Pass De Monts, a mass of lofty and fantastically shaped mountains, having the axis of their strike nearly east and west. The loftiest of these, on the west side of the road, and almost overhanging it, attains an altitude of about 2,500 feet. It is quite bald on the summit, and perpendicular on one face. These huge masses of rock are the more imposing from their rising abruptly from an almost level plain. They are the great natural gates which close the interior on this side, corresponding with those already described at its northern entrance, near the great Ha-ha Lake. With the Pass De Monts, the terra incognita may be said to terminate. Small settlements, scattered at first, and gradually more frequent, began to shew themselves. We could see the humble huts of the husbandmen, and the children playing in the shade, while, here and there, some sun-browned laborer stood in the doorway, shading his eyes with his hand, and gazing inquisitively in our direction. At length, we passed the church of St. Urbain, and crossed the hospitable threshold of Moïse Côté, thus agreeably terminating what to me had been an excursion of more than ordinary interest.

Let me remark, before concluding, that I cannot but think it most important, in the interests of colonization, that this line of road, from St. Urbain to Ha-ha Bay, should be finally completed for travel. I am aware that since the date of my journey, much has been done. It appears to me that the finest part of the Saguenay country, for agricultural purposes, is that great peninsula in the neighborhood of Lake St. John, extending eastward to the River Chicoutimi. This tract has the Kenogami Road in the interior; it has also the Sydenham Road, to connect it with Ha-ha Bay, a remarkably good line of road, level and well made. I have been over it in a calèche, from end to end, some eleven or twelve miles, and found it as easy travelling as anywhere in the vicinity of Quebec; and the same may be said of the road from Chicoutimi westward, over which I have travelled in a summer vehicle, into the Township of Jonquiere. I look on the Ha-ha Bay, therefore, as being the natural terminus or seaport of the peninsula, a bay whose marine capabilities seem to be but imperfectly appreciated. The Hon. De Sales Laterriere, in a published letter of 1827, speaks of it as being "the great mart hereafter on the Saguenay, and natural port for vessels arriving from beyond the sea." And in the same spirit, the Deputy Surveyor General, who had charge of the expedition in 1827, remarks in his journal: "The Bay des Has evidently appears to have been formed by nature as the principal seat of commerce and trade of all this portion of country; 1st, For the extensive tract of level land that lies about it, extending to Lake Tsiamogomi and Chicoutimi; 2dly, For the harbour it affords for the largest vessels of the line, which can sail directly into the Bay with nearly the same wind that they ascended the Saguenay, and anchor in the second Bay which it appears to form in manner of a basin, which I presume would be a fit site for a mart of trade; and 3dly, The facility that is afforded of opening a road to Chicoutimi," (which has now been done), "or direct to the head of Tsiamagomi,—indeed the great ease with which a water communication could be effected between it and that lake to remove the intricate and

“ circuitous route of the Chicoutimi River, the difference of level not exceeding 250 feet, in a distance of $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 leagues through the level tract that lies between these places. It is protected by Cap à l’Est, and the prominent hills that form its entrance.” So also Mr. Surveyor Proulx, in his Report of the same date, says, “ the Bay is about 11 miles wide at its mouth, and running 2 miles inland would afford a complete shelter for a great number of vessels of any size. The anchorage is very good, and varies in depth from fifteen to thirty-five fathoms. This bay forms a harbour wherein vessels would be sheltered from all winds.” This statement is confirmed as to the depth of water by the recent admiralty chart of Captain Bayfield, which also shews how admirably the inner bay is protected by the surrounding highlands. Having therefore these data : a fine tract of country with a mild climate at Lake St. John, and an excellent road thence to Ha-ha Bay, formed by nature to be the great sea-port, it is obvious that the grand desideratum is a line of road which should at all seasons, in winter as well as in summer, connect the Bay with the older settlements on the St. Lawrence. I believe that the line to St. Urbain fulfils these conditions.

Some years have elapsed since the date of this service, but to me it will always remain present as one of many similar reminiscences. Here as elsewhere I found cheerfulness and contentedness hallowing and ennobling a life of privation and toil. Looking on one of these men of the wilderness, who would not say, with Carlyle, “ I honor the toil-worn craftsman who laboriously conquers the earth, and makes her man’s. Venerable to me is the hard hand, crooked, coarse, wherein, notwithstanding, lies a cunning virtue, indefeasibly royal, as of the sceptre of this planet. Venerable too is the rugged face, all weather-tanned, besoiled, with its rude intelligence ; for it is the face of a man living manlike. Oh, but the more venerable for thy rudeness, and even because we must pity as well as love thee ! Hardly entreated brother ! For us was thy back so bent ; for us were thy straight limbs and fingers so deformed ; thou wert our conscript, on whom the lot fell,

and fighting our battles wert so marred." Assuredly, here, if any where, is to be found the very bone and sinew of our strength. And it was not without regret that I exchanged the free, fresh air of the forest, and the frank hospitality of its inhabitants, for the worn-out platitudes and hollow unrealities of a life in towns. Not without regret did I resign a communion with all that is grand and beautiful in nature for the questionable advantages of civic refinement. There is much to be learned from a life in the backwoods. Fortitude, patience, perseverance ; these, the great lessons of life, are best learned there. It were well if our young men would devote themselves more to the cultivation of the soil. It seems sad to see so many wasting the great gift of time in idle frivolities. Let them go out and subdue the wilderness, and make it their own. It was thus in old time that the fathers of Rome, the masters of the world, strengthened body and soul by labours in the field, and the same hands that handled the mattock or the spade could wield on occasion the sword of the general or the rod of the dictator. Of a truth among these there was a manliness, a simplicity, a depth of character, owing in great part, to their respect and attachment for agricultural pursuits. Some of the noblest families derived their surnames from cultivating particular kinds of grain, as the Fabii, the Pisones, the Lentuli, the Cicerones, and others. To be a good husbandman was accounted the highest praise. *Bonus colonus* or *agricola* was equivalent to *vir bonus*, and whoever neglected the cultivation of his ground was liable to the rebuke of the censors. The elder Cato, Cincinnatus, Curius Dentatus, Fabricius, Regulus, these were the true types of the ancient Roman, and, when these failed, the state crumbled in ruin. Let us profit by the example. The future of the country is in the hands of its youth. May they be faithful to the trust ! And to them and to all of us what now remains but to stand shoulder to shoulder, forgetting all minor differences, and having but one thought,—the good of the commonweal. We, moreover, have a faith which the old Roman was not permitted to enjoy,—a faith which, I believe, lives and burns throughout the length and breadth of the land.

It was a noble and poetic thought which, years ago, raised a cross on the summit of the Belcœil mountain. I would it were restored. I have seen it flash in the sun at a distance of many leagues ; a sublime emblem, a significant confession of a united Christian people. Taking our stand here, untiring in our labors, unflinching in our aspirations, let us hope that a peculiar blessing will rest on this fair land, and that our children, or our children's children, may see it self-reliant, self-sustained, self-protecting,—a Nation among Nations. *Esto perpetua.*

SESSION OF 1868-9.

TRANSACTIONS

of the

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