

*V.—The Analytical Study of Canadian History.**By* JOHN LESPERANCE.

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The study of Canadian history does not date beyond thirty years, and it is a remarkable instance of the law of parallels that research brought material to light, and that material gave new impulse to research. Garneau had few original elements to work on, but the moment his volumes appeared, discoveries were made simultaneously in the archives of the capitals of Europe, and these documents gave ample scope to half-a-dozen successors of Garneau. Much has thus been done within the past quarter of a century, but much more remains to be accomplished; and I conceive it to be one of the main duties of the Royal Society of Canada to see that a certain portion, at least, of this progress should be achieved under its auspices. In furtherance of this object, I beg to call the attention of my colleagues of the Section of English Literature to the following points:—

## I.

It is now well understood that the fullest documentary evidence bearing on the history of Canada exists in several of the principal libraries of Europe. Those of Paris and London are, of course, preëminent; but even in St. Petersburg, important papers relating to New France have been found, rescued from the spoils of the French Revolution, and in Rome, the Vatican library has thrown open treasures connected with the Jesuit missions, the foundation of the see of Quebec, and the Sulpitian establishment of Ville Marie, which had lain hidden until lately. The new scientific system of classification and tabulation, applied in these great libraries, renders the consultation of manuscripts comparatively easy, while the liberal spirit of modern governments, recognising the imperative need of historic truth, without fear or favour, offers every facility to the student for reading, annotating or copying. All things considered, it may be said that there is, perhaps, no nation so happily situated as we are in respect of the abundance of authentic documentary material, extending fully over the two centuries and a half of our history.

Stimulated by this fact, the work of collation has been carried on quite briskly in Canada itself, with the double object of securing duplicates of the most precious European papers, and of carefully preserving such manuscripts as are known to exist in immense quantities throughout the different provinces of the Dominion. The Federal Department of Archives, at Ottawa, under the zealous and intelligent direction of Mr. Brymner, deserves to be mentioned in the first place, while a fit pendant thereto is to be found in the files of the Department of State, under Colonel Audet. I am happy to know that our

parliamentary librarians have also an eye to our historical antiquities and curiosities in the selection and acquisition of books. Quebec deserves the honour of having led in the same field, the Government always deeming it a duty to enrich the legislative library with the rarest books and writings. Unfortunately, periodical fires have sensibly lessened the value of these collections, and the better plan has now been adopted of printing such transcriptions as are made. Thus, the "Manuscripts" in four large quartos and the "Ordonnances" now being published in a number of volumes, are sure of surviving all accidents of flame or flood. The history of Ontario is much more recent, and the material is thus less plentiful, but the Government have taken the wise precaution of gleaning everything that comes within their reach. The publication in 1869, of the Proceedings of Nova Scotia, has thrown a flood of light on many obscure and bitterly disputed points in the history of the old Acadian land.

Private bodies have patriotically followed in the same wake. The Quebec Literary and Historical Society was the first to copy and publish valuable manuscripts. The Société Historique de Montréal is doing the same with periodic regularity. The Halifax Historical Society has lately given signs of renewed activity, while, if the Winnipeg Historical Society maintains the zeal which it displays at present, there need be no fear that any particle of Northwest story will be lost to the world. While all these individual associations are working so assiduously, might it not be well to consider the advisability of establishing a general body, called the Historical Society of Canada, whose object should be, in periodical meetings, to gather, coördinate and transfuse into one homogeneous whole, all these separate labours? And would it not be a further advantage if this general society were formed under the sanction and with the coöperation of the Royal Society of Canada? As one step in that direction, the Royal Society might unite, during the present session, in a memorial to the Federal Government, urging the need of continuing and increasing the work of collecting manuscripts, either original or transcribed, wherever they may be procured and whatever they may cost.

## II.

But it is not enough to possess material; that material must be employed. It is not sufficient to have wherewithal to write history; that history must be written. Herein something has been done, but not very much; and it may be said that our historical literature is still in its infancy. This literature may be classed under five heads, viz., General History, Monographs, Biographies, Historical Novels and Memoirs.

I.—In the first place, we have no General History of Canada in English, excluding, of course, elementary and school text-books, some of which are quite suited to their purpose. The French have the field all to themselves. The pioneer was Garneau, whose work is a monument when we remember the unfavourable circumstances under which it was written. The literary merit is of a high order, the spirit is broad and patriotic, and the teachings have been such as to elevate the compatriots to whom it was addressed. Naturally, the English reader cannot be expected to accept many of Garneau's political estimates and military comments; while there is a portion of French Canadians who have not shared his views on certain ecclesiastical controversies and national movements.

Ferland, professor of history at Laval University, comes next, with a work which has the irredeemable drawback of having been left unfinished. But what there is of it is invaluable for depth of research, fidelity of exposition, and ease of narrative. Another edition of Ferland is wanted, after the new one of Garneau, ably edited by his son and supplemented by a biography from the pen of our late President, the Hon. P. J. O. Chauveau. The third historian is Faillon, whose "Histoire de la Colonie française dans la Nouvelle-France," is an encyclopedia of most minute information, gathered with the industry of a Benedictine, and set forth with the authority of a writer whose numerous works on history have won him an European reputation. Three volumes, in quarto, of this work have appeared, but the remaining five are finished, and it is to be hoped that they will soon be published. When complete, Faillon will simply be a storehouse wherein the future historian will have nothing to do but draw by the handful. The last of the French writers on this subject is Benjamin Sulte, a colleague of the Royal Society. His work is entitled, "Histoire des Canadiens-français," and is published in monthly parts. The aim of the author has been to draw largely from every source within his reach, and he has done so to such purpose, that no student of Canadian history can afford to be without his volumes, even if he should not agree with M. Sulte in certain opinions which have provoked considerable criticism.

I have said that we have no general history of Canada, in English. When Parkman's next volume appears, covering the period between 1700 and the memorable epoch beginning 1749, his whole work will include the annals of New France from the beginning to the cession by the Treaty of Paris, in 1763; but it can never be regarded as a continuous history, and—in spite of its literary excellence, and the vast range of its thoroughly reliable information—the spirit in which much of it is written, however sincere and honestly meant to be impartial, is of a character utterly unacceptable to a large class of readers.

As Parkman does not supply the want to which I have called attention, it only remains to say that the history of Canada has yet to be written. It is a task of peculiar difficulty. The man who undertakes it must be thoroughly imbued with the exceptional nature of exceptional epochs. He must understand the French people; appreciate the motives which prompted the colonisation of New France, and properly interpret the meaning of events, well nigh inexplicable in our day. On the other hand, he must understand the English people; give them due credit for their generous course at the Conquest; master the objects of the Quebec Act of 1774, the Constitution of 1792, the Union Act of 1841, and that whole system of fair play which has made the French people, under British rule, the freest and happiest under the sun.

Judging from the present literary activity and the growing taste for historical studies, there is reason to hope that the next complete general history of Canada will soon be forthcoming. It need not exceed four royal octavo volumes—two devoted to French, and two to British rule, with full indices and tabulated chronology. I am sure that such a work would be, commercially, very successful, and to a man of talent and purpose, here is an unquestionable opportunity for fame.

II.—Of Monographs or partial histories, our literary record is more fruitful. In the first place, there is a history of every province of the Dominion, except Quebec, but that is hardly necessary, inasmuch as the ancient province is associated with the whole history of the country from first to last. The Eastern Townships, however, have their own

history, as also separate districts in the several provinces. In the second place, we have a number of monographs on detached events of importance, such as that of the period between the Conquest and the Union; the Rebellion of 1837-38, in both Canadas; the Scotch in Canada, the Irish in Canada, the United Empire Loyalists, and others.

III.—I cannot speak so well of our Biographies. They are not sufficiently numerous for one thing, and there are only a few of them that rise above mediocrity. As most of the subjects of Canadian biography are political, the authors have generally written either in the spirit of pamphleteers or with the mistaken zeal of extreme partisanship.

IV.—Our Historical Novels are still more unsatisfactory, both as regards quantity and quality. I cannot count more than a dozen in all—seven or eight in French, and the remainder in English—that deserve to be mentioned.

V.—We have not much in Memoirs as yet, but more may be expected from this source in the near future. As events multiply, those who take part in public life will naturally write out their impressions, repeat their experiences, collate their speeches and arrange their correspondence, so that their personal share in these events may be transmitted to posterity, and embodied in the general history of the time. Take the instance of Sir John A. Macdonald, whose career extends over forty years of most active life; the memoirs of such a man would be of incalculable importance to the political historian.

### III.

While waiting for the general history of the country to which reference has been made, it were desirable that courses of Canadian history should be taught in our Universities. It is a very singular fact that there is not a Chair of Canadian History in the whole of the Dominion, and while this is a proof of the general apathy on the subject, it goes far toward explaining the equally general ignorance which we all deplore. Which of our leading institutions of learning will take the lead in this direction? What patriotic citizen will endow the first chair? It should be a question of rivalry between Montreal and Toronto, Halifax and St. John. For such a professor I would lay down the following scheme of twenty-four lectures,—twelve on the French and twelve on the British rule:—

#### FRENCH-CANADIAN PERIOD.

- (1). NAVIGATION AND DISCOVERY.—The Icelanders. Columbus. Cabot. Verazzani. Cartier and Roberval.
- (2). FOUNDATION AND SETTLEMENT.—Champlain and Quebec. Maisonneuve and Montreal. Poutrincourt and Port Royal.
- (3). MISSION AND MARTYRDOM.—The Recollets. The Jesuits. Brebœuf. Lalemant. Jogues.
- (4). EXPLORATION AND ADVENTURE.—Joliet. Marquette. Lasalle. Hennepin. Dablon. Dollier du Casson.

- (5). COLONIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION.—Colbert. Talon. Marriages. Distribution of Land. Seigneurial Rights. Administration of Justice. Ecclesiastical Titles. Militia Service. The Constitution of the Sovereign Council.
- (6). INDIAN WARS.—Campaigns against the Iroquois, begun by Champlain, continued by Courcelle, Tracy and Frontenac.
- (7). GOLDEN AGE OF NEW FRANCE, including Frontenac's two Administrations from 1672 to 1700.—Laval de Montmorenci. Wars with the Indians and the Whites of New England and New York. Defence of Quebec.
- (8). INTERREGNUM, from the Treaty of Ryswick, 1697, to the outbreak of the Seven Years' War, 1756.—Shirley and Braddock's Expeditions. Bigot and the whole romance of his peculations and debaucheries. Vaudreuil's Administration.
- (9). CONQUEST AND EXPULSION.—The Acadians, an episode extending from the Treaty of Utrecht, in 1713, to the time of the expatriation in 1755.
- (10). CAMPAIGN OF 1758.—Montcalm. Carillon. Louisbourg. Fort George. State of Canada. Relative Forces.
- (11). CAMPAIGN OF 1759.—Wolfe. Capture of French centre and left lines of defence. The Plains of Abraham. Surrender of Quebec.
- (12). CAMPAIGN OF 1760.—Levis. Ste. Foye. French Siege of Quebec. Last stand at Montreal. Capitulation. Military occupation. Treaty of Paris.

## ANGLO-CANADIAN PERIOD.

- (1). MILITARY RULE.—Dorchester's Administration. Quebec Act, 1774. New Constitution, 1792. Legislative Beginnings.
- (2). WAR OF 1812.—Land Engagements. Niagara. Chippewa. Lundy's Lane. Queens-town. Chateauguay. Lake Engagements. Lakes Erie, Ontario, Champlain. Tecumseh.
- (3). FAMILY COMPACT.—Downing Street. Petitions to the foot of the Throne. French Representation. Papineau.
- (4). REBELLION OF 1837-8.—Sons of Liberty. Patriots and Bureaucrats. St. Denis. St. Charles. St. Eustache. More's Corner. Beauharnois. Odelltown. Executions.
- (5). REBELLION OF 1837, IN UPPER CANADA—Mackenzie. The Volunteers.
- (6). UNION ACT.—First Parliament. Origin of Parties. Baldwin and Lafontaine. Riots of 1848. Annexation.
- (7). ABOLITION OF SEIGNORIAL TENURE.—Separate Schools. Double Shuffle. The American Civil War.

- (8). CONFEDERATION.—Negotiations. Analysis of the British North America Act. Purchase of the Hudson Bay Territory.
- (9). FENIAN INVASIONS.—Treaty of Reciprocity. The Fisheries. The Treaty of Washington.
- (10). NATIONAL POLICY.—Withdrawal of the Troops. Supreme Court. Theory of the Protective Tariff.
- (11). PACIFIC RAILWAY, including the Intercolonial. — History of the Grand Trunk. Enlargement of Canals. Ocean and Lake Shipping.
- (12). NORTHWEST REBELLION.—Riel. Study of the Origin, History and Claims of the Metis. Full study of Canadian Indians from beginning to our day.

#### IV.

Besides this general study of the history of Canada, there is a great variety of special work to be done ; and I shall conclude by a brief mention of several points among these.

I.—Our Cartology is lamentably deficient, and yet it is well understood how necessary to the study of history are full and accurate maps. The old charts of Cartier, Champlain and other travellers, should all be reedited, every date and place being properly fixed. This task will be found a very difficult one, and I question whether there is any single scholar in the country that is equal to it. This work would have to be done under the auspices of the Government, and it were, perhaps, advisable to appoint a Commission for the purpose.

II.—Our Antiquities and Curiosities have been too long neglected. No time should be lost in establishing at the capital a National Museum, such as they have connected with the Indian Department at Washington. What exists here, already, of that kind, might be used as a kernel, and, indeed, it might not be amiss to have the institution serve as an annex of the Geological Survey. Every thing that can possibly throw light on the ethnology, the archæology, the anthropology, and the natural curiosities of the country, would find a place in this museum, and within a very few years we should have a collection of invaluable importance to the student and scholar.

III.—Nor should the services of Art be overlooked. It is pleasant to be able to say that, here, at least, something tangible has been attempted and more is to be expected. The portraits of the successive Speakers of the Legislative Assemblies have been kept, as also the series of the Speakers of the Senate.

In the plan of the new Parliamentary Buildings of Quebec are a number of niches destined to contain the figures of our principal men, from Cartier down.

The picture of the Fathers of Confederation, at the grand staircase leading to the House of Commons and the Senate, here at Ottawa, is the result of a patriotic idea which, while giving impulse to native art, preserves indelibly on canvas the scene of a conference which moulded the present destinies of Canada.

In Montreal another project is being mooted, the value of which cannot be overestimated. It consists in gathering from public and private sources, and from every available quarter in the country, an exhibition of portraits—large or miniature, prints and cuts

—of as many notable men and women as are mentioned in our annals. A large number of the old families of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario and Quebec, are known to possess such relics of their ancestors. Five or six of the religious houses of Quebec and Montreal—male and female—are particularly rich in these pictures. An exhibition of this description, largely contributed to, and supplied with an ample *catalogue raisonné* would prove quite a revelation in our history, and, perhaps a recommendation from the Royal Society might encourage the Art Association of Montreal to go on with it.

Finally, all our chief municipalities should be urged to set up monuments to their founders or earliest settlers. Thus, Quebec might raise a colossal statue to Champlain, on the site of the old Château St. Louis; Montreal, to Maisonneuve, on the present Place d'Armes, although that is not the locality, as is supposed, where the valiant Chomedey had his hand-to-hand encounter with the Iroquois Chief; Halifax, to Cornwallis; Toronto, to Simcoe; and Ottawa, to By, on Major's Hill.

IV.—There are two classes of special studies which require attention, because more difficult and subject to more technical research. These are Episodes and Problems.

A.—Among the former, that might be treated in separate books or pamphlets, as complete works or essays, may be mentioned:—

1. The Seignories from their establishment to the abolition of the tenure.
2. The genealogical descent of Canadian families and their population at different dates. A most interesting work, even to the general reader, could be written on this subject, drawn mainly from the precious Genealogical Dictionary of our colleague, Abbé Tanguay.
3. The Civil Government of New France, as elaborated by Colbert and carried out by Talon. Here Faillon and his biographer, M. Desmazures, will furnish useful material.
4. The Origin and History of the Canadian Indian tribes. This field has been only partially explored, and we are yet to have our Canadian Schoolcraft.

B.—Among the Problems I may cite:—

1. The whole Laval Ecclesiastical Controversy, the bearings of which may be gathered from the fact that it has been brought down even to our day.
2. The Discovery of the Mississippi. In spite of all the works on the subject, its mystery has not yet been solved.
3. The Battle of the Monongahela. The great name of Washington has hitherto stood in the way of a clear understanding of the fate of Jumonville.
4. The Massacre of Fort George.
5. The Destruction of Levis' flags at St. Helena.
6. The inner history of the Quebec Act of 1774.
7. The secret history of the Family Compact.

For the elucidation of these episodes and problems, if suitable prizes were added, a powerful impulse would be given to the philosophical study of Canadian History, and the teaching could be popularised by distributing these books as prizes by the School Boards of the several provinces.