



QUEBEC FROM THE ST. LAWRENCE, SHOWING CITADEL AND CHATEAU FRONTENAC.

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A HISTORY OF QUEBEC ITS RESOURCES AND PEOPLE

ILLUSTRATED

BY

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INTRODUCTION.

BEING the history of the Province of Quebec, this work is necessarily limited to what concerns the territory known now-a-days by that name, and to the circumstances particular to its population through three centuries, but we must keep in mind the fact that this province alone was until the Union of 1841 all that was known as Canada and, therefore, the centre of both the French and the English colonies of the northern portions of this continent. It follows that a narrative solely devoted to that section in the present state of things would tend to obscure the fact that Quebec was for a long time the pivot for all that was done in these vast territories. We have been, more than once, on the verge of entering into the history of the other provinces for the sake of throwing additional light upon the whole, but finally our scope was confined to what took place within the political boundaries prescribed by the British administration. In reality, the history of Quebec is that of all the confederate provinces.

Even restricted to that area we find it difficult to bring forward any important fact without trespassing upon the Maritime Provinces or Ontario, because these are closely linked to the surrounding colonies and it seems hard to isolate them from their connection.

No one would have believed that New France could ever have formed so many provinces, but the conquest made this possible. As Quebec remained for a long time the pivot for such an extensive Dominion, it is certain that its old and well-settled population played a great part, notwithstanding the division of territory which gave rise to other colonies.

Judging by the measure of European prejudices the French could not hold their own after the conquest, but those who had remained on the land were no more Frenchmen, they were Canadians, and the Treaty of 1763 made them British subjects to all intents and purposes. Consequently they did not care for any other country than Canada, and all they had to do was to get accustomed to the British administration.

Amongst the common mistakes which an European government will

make, is the idea that men in the colonies deserve little attention and must be kept in bondage to a certain extent. Add to that the desire of some individuals who came to Canada with the hope of making their fortune and to dictate law to a conquered people, and you have the key to a lot of difficulties and a long struggle, which could have been avoided by giving the new subjects enough time to re-assure themselves after the war.

Must we say that the political troubles were nothing but a misconception of the London ministry in regard to Canadian affairs and the Canadian people? This is now well understood. Happily, the introduction of the mercantile class after the conquest was useful in developing the resources of the country. It is true also that they were wrong in trying to act as politicians.

In due time, men of remarkable ability and patriotism came to the front, both Canadians of the old stock and newly established colonists, to do the good work of loyal and legal resistance, in order to gain for this section of the British Empire the exercise of liberty as granted to all faithful subjects of the Crown.

New, yet important, dominions within the Empire now enjoy the same freedom as we, but who can deny that it was in Quebec and Ontario that was kindled the spark which inflamed the hearts of these other colonies? For this we claim an early mention in the annals of history.

Such being the facts, we must not look upon the Province of Quebec as a mere subdivision in our wide confederation and still less as merely a small portion of the Great Empire.

Unknown to the world until a very recent date, Canada has now a high place in the consideration of the powers.

Let us claim for the oldest settlement on the shore of the St. Lawrence the honour of being the cradle of political liberty.

The Maritime Provinces, as well as Ontario, have also an honourable and proud origin, so that Canada on the whole has nothing to regret, and much to its credit.

Every period, whether long or short, during the last three centuries has been marked by steady progress. The twentieth century will accomplish threefold.

3rd July, 1908.

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