

ROY, James, «The French Language in Canada», dans *Canadian Illustrated News*, Montréal, vol. 16, n° 17, 27 oct. 1877, p. 258-259.

Nous connaissons malheureusement peu de choses sur la vie du révérend James Roy (1834-1922). Nous savons qu'il était d'origine britannique et montréalaise<sup>1</sup>, qu'il était instruit et qu'il fut collaborateur au journal *Canadian Illustrated News*.<sup>2</sup>

#### « THE FRENCH LANGUAGE IN CANADA

According to the census of 1871, the population of the four Provinces which at first formed the Canadian Confederation, is, 3,485,761. That of the Province of Quebec is 1,191,516. The French population of the four Provinces is 1,082,940. That of the Province of Quebec is 929,817, or over 26 per cent of the population of the Dominion. The influence of so large a population of French origin, massed in one Province, makes the question of the character and influence of the French language in Canada one of vital importance to the whole country. The character of a people largely depends upon the literature their language opens up for them, and the religious thought with which it is associated. The isolation which must exist between the French people of Canada and the majority of the population of the continent must affect the former even more than the latter. Hence the tendencies of the French language, in their influence on our national destiny, are of interest to both scholars and statesmen. Besides, there is a peculiar value in a language, viewed in itself, which may decide, to a great extent, the propriety or impropriety of its preservation.

The study of language contributes no small share to the solution of important questions raised by other branches of science or philosophy. It aids in the comprehension of the complex nature of man. It unfolds and illustrates human history. It aids in the solution of problems of metaphysics and religion. By it, we are enabled, to a considerable degree, to test the authorship and age of ancient documents. By the laws it reveals, we are enabled to predict many probabilities of the future.

In Canada, we have a form of the French language which is peculiar to its own locality. Whether to call it a dialect, or a *patois*, or neither, is somewhat difficult to determine. A dialect is

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<sup>1</sup> Les renseignements sur l'origine de Roy sont tirés de : ST-YVES, Gabrielle, *La conception du français canadien et de ses particularismes lexicaux vue à travers la recherche de critères d'évaluation...*, thèse de doctorat, Université de Toronto, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> BEAULIEU, A. et HAMELIN, J., *La presse québécoise des origines à nos jours. t.2 (1860-1879)*, p. 140.

usually regarded as a local branch of a language, distinguished from other branches of the same language mainly by peculiarities of pronunciation, and possessing a literature in which these peculiarities are marked by the spelling. A *patois* is taken to be a dialect which has lost its literature, and has become only a spoken idiom. Thus, in ancient Greece, there were the Attic, Ionic, Doric, and Aeolic dialects, whose memory is perpetuated in the works respectively of Xenophon, Herodotus, Theocritus, and Sappho. In modern Greek, we have the dialect of Asia Minor, the Chiotic, the Cretan, the Cyprian, the Peloponnesian, and the dialect of the Ionian Islands. In English, we have the dialects of Devonshire, Dorsetshire, Yorkshire, and many others. What Max Müller calls the *dialects* of the Friesian Islands may be taken as examples of what are called by the French word *patois*, a Friesian literature having existed in the 12th century, but none such being now found. The French language as spoken in Canada has a literature and a peculiar pronunciation; but the latter is not marked in the literature of the country by any general peculiarity in spelling, so that it scarcely accords with the definition of a dialect. Its pronunciation is quite different from that of Lyons or Orleans; but it has a literature, though no one at a distance from Canada, in reading that literature, would suspect the existence of a pronunciation different from that which prevails in the best society of France. Indeed, so pure is the French of M. Faucher de St. Maurice, that its Canadian origin was publicly denied. M. Hector Fabre, M. Chauveau, M. Garneau, together with Crémazie, Fréchette, Lemay, Routhier, Marmette, Benjamin Sulte, and others, are writers whose productions have been favorably compared with the works of some of the best authors of modern France. In the United States, English is spoken with peculiarities of pronunciation, expressions and idioms, some of which are but the heir-looms of English shires from which the ancestors of many Americans emigrated; yet no one thinks of calling the English spoken south of the line forty-five either a dialect or a *patois*. The French spoken in the Province of Quebec is in precisely the same circumstances, and is, properly speaking, neither a dialect nor a *patois*; nor does it branch off into dialects of its own. Different localities have their various terms which custom has sanctioned, and which are often not used beyond those localities; and the whole country uses terms not considered correct in France today; but the French of Gaspé is, on the whole, the same as that of Manitoba. Thus, along the line of the Intercolonial Railway, one hears a fence-rail called *pieu* and not *perche*; an embankment is *tombe* and not *remblai*. At Rivière-du-Loup, the clearing out of a ditch is represented by the verb *clairer*; at Rimouski, by *caler*; at Trois-Pistoles, by *vider*. In Montreal, a

certain kind of fried cake known in France as *croquignole* is called *baigne*, and in Quebec, *croxignole*. A hay-loft is, in Montreal, *grenier-à-foin*, and in Quebec, as in France, *fenil*. The shafts of a vehicle are called *travail* instead of *brancards*. Reins (of harness) are in one place called *guides*, and in another, *cordeaux*. *Langage* is used for *langue*. *Bâtisse* is used for *bâtiment*; *défunt* for *feu*; *pataque*, a corrupt form of *patate*, for *pomme-de-terre*; *intellecte* for *intelligence*; and *pas capable* for *je ne puis*, or *je ne peux pas*. Smoke is often called *boucane* and not *fumée*. Gooseberry is *gadelle* and not *groseille*. The furniture of a church is often called *ménage* and not *mobilier*. Nevertheless, the language, as a whole, over the entire country, amongst educated and uneducated alike, is the same.

The history of Canada unfolds the fact that the sources of the earliest streams of immigration are found around the northwestern shores of France, chiefly in the vicinity of the Golfe de St. Malo. The names Dieppe and Rouen, in Normandy; of St. Malo, in Bretagne; and of LaRoche, in Aunis, are the first to occur in the accounts of early attempts at settlement. The settlers were chiefly peasants, sailors, and soldiers, under the leadership of priests, traders, and noblemen. The time of the earliest permanent settlement was in 1608, two years before the assassination of Henry IV by Ravaillac. The first birth of a child of French parents was that of Eustache Martin, son of Abraham Martin and Marguerite Langlois, at Quebec, on the 24th of May, 1621. In 1663, the colonists numbered 2000. (Boyd. Hist. Can., p. 29.) In 1665, a large immigration so increased the population that in 1667 it numbered 4312. (p. 31.) In 1682, it amounted to 10,000. (p. 34.) In 1703, it was 15,000, (p. 39); in 1736, 40,000 (p. 42); in 1750, 65,000. As Canada was ceded to England in 1763, it will be seen that the bulk of the French population arrived in Canada during the reigns of Louis XIV and Louis XV.

From the review of the sources of the population, the character and social position of the people, and the time of their immigration, we can ascertain the relation of the language spoken by the colonists to that of their native land both then and now.

After Gaul had been conquered by Caesar, the low Latin of his soldiers, with an almost imperceptible Keltic element and a larger amount of Teutonic speech, gradually developed, north of a line drawn from LaRoche to Grenoble, into the Langue d'Oil. This, again, on the lips of different tribes, separated into four leading dialects, -- Norman, Picard, Burgundian, and French, or the dialect of Ile de France. In 987, Hugh Capet, duke of France, was elected King; and then commenced the growth of the political power of that ancient Province which, after less than four

centuries, saw at its feet Berri, Picardie, Touraine, Normandy, Languedoc, and Champagne. The subjection of Normandy took place in 1204, A.D. The dialect of Ile de France then prevailed, first in the official records of the conquerors, and afterwards in the literary works of the country, while the Norman dialect sank into a mere patois. The abandonment of the last remnant of the Latin declensions in the fourteenth century marks the division of modern from ancient French. The French of the 15th century is complete; and, in the 16th century, during which the founding of Canada took place, the French became the court, legal and literary language from the Seine to the Loire. For more than four centuries, the Norman dialect had been subjected to this growing French. In the Channel Islands, it had been cut off from its communication with the changeful influences of the continent at the end of the 12th, or the beginning of the 13th century, when England, under King John, lost Normandy, but retained those islands. In its home on the mainland, therefore, the Norman must have ceased to exert any greater influence than that which might arise from such local peculiarities of expression and pronunciation as those which the habits of an illiterate people would preserve amid the changes of centuries.

At the time when Canada was founded, Parisian French was less correct than that of the quarter from which the mass of the early settlers of Canada proceeded. In the first French Grammar ever published, written in London by an Englishman, John Palsgrave, in 1530, and now so rare that only one copy exists in France, the author reproaches the Parisians for substituting the letter z for r, as they said *Pazisiens* and *Mazie* for *Parisiens* and *Marie*. (Angel, Hist. F. Lit. p. 22.) An examination of the classics of the Augustan age of French literature will prove that some things now regarded as evidences that the French of Canada is a degenerate *patois* were the standard pronunciations of the times preceding and during the most brilliant period of the French theatre. The three sounds which most distinguish the French-Canadian pronunciation are those of the diphthong *oi*, the syllable *ais*, and the letter *a*, which are sounded respectively *oué*, *a*, and *aw*. Brachet, in his Etymological Dictionary (Introd. p. lix.) tells us that, in reference to the first of these sounds, the words *oiseau*, *loi*, *foi*, *roi*, were pronounced by Molière, Louis XIV, and, in the case of the word *roi*, as late as 1830, by Lafayette, *ouézseau*, *foué*, *loué*, *roué*. The modern Parisian sounds were noticed as peculiar even by Palsgrave, and were laughed at as vulgar and clownish by Molière. That Brachet is correct may be seen from a couplet found in *Le Misanthrope*, Act. 1., Sc. i :

"Lorsqu'un homme vous vient embrasser avec joie,  
Il faut bien le payer de la même monnaie."

The last words were evidently intended to make rhyme; but, as Parisians now pronounce and spell the words, *joie* and *monnaie* cannot do so : *joie* must have been pronounced *joué*. One editor, M. Dubois, appends to these lines the following note : "*Joie et monnaie ne rameraient plus aujourd'hui.*"

We are not without evidence that the French-Canadian pronunciation of the letter *a* is that of the Norman invaders of England. We all know how it is pronounced by those military "swells" who, under the new regulations of the army in England, *cawnt* think of obeying the *commawnds* of one who has been raised from the *rawnks* to be their superior officer, or who are rendered indignant by the presence of a *'blawsted* fence." Earle, in his "Philology of the English Tongue," (pp. 117, 121, 161,) shows that this pronunciation is, doubtless, a remnant of the influences exerted upon English speech by the Norman invaders. His remarks are borne out by Chaucer, whose Chauntecleer, Meschaunce, Caunterbury, and Flaundes might be added to the examples given by Earle. That the representation of the French, as well as the Saxon *a* by *aw* is not confined to nasal syllables is evident from the word *laugh* (*lawf*), which Earle quotes as an example. The Rev. M. Lafleur informed me that Athanase Coquerel, père, used, only 25 years ago, to pronounce the letter *a* with the sound *aw*, as French Canadians do now. Hyde Clarke, in his "Handbook of Comparative Philology," p. 5, says : "Thus in France there are those who have heard the vowel *a* called by the old men *aw*, which is now made *ah*."

I once passed two Canadian women who were conversing aloud; and, as I passed, I caught the remark of one and the reply of the other : *C'est paw moué*, and *c'est vrâ*. On another occasion, on asking what was the matter with a broken wagon, I received the answer, *Le spring est cawsé*. In these short sentences were combined the marked peculiarities of Canadian pronunciation of French; yet the sounds were not those of a corrupted speech, but of one that has outlived the changes of many centuries. A friend of mine once overheard in one sentence three marked Norman peculiarities of Canadian French : *'ienqu'un p'tit brin à c'theure*. That the prevailing language of the province of Quebec, while tinged with Norman peculiarities, is, nevertheless, not Norman but French, or the product of Ile de France, may be seen by a comparison of it with the literature of the Channel Islands, and with the early literature of Normandy. Of these islands, the most important in this connection is Guernsey; for Alderney, lying nearest to England, has become most subject to English influences on its speech; and Jersey, lying nearest to France, has become more subject to the influences of that country, while

Guernsey has retained the Norman dialect the purest of all. I shall first quote from a work written in 1871 by Denys Corbet, and entitled : *Les Fieilles de la Fouarêt*. The first lines of the Dedication are as follows :

"V'là l'esprit, l'cueur et la vouaix  
D'yun qui rime au fond du bouais."

Few persons would confound the pronunciation of *voo-ah-ee* for *voix*, *yun* for *un*, and *boo-ah-ee* for *bois*, with the sounds heard in Montreal, Quebec, or St. Hyacinthe.

The following stanza is from a poem entitled *L'étaï*, a Bourguignon expression for *L'été* :

"Savoûs l'art de vivre bien,  
Et d'être terjoûs content?  
C'hest de n'se gênaïr de rien  
Et d'prendre tout taï qui vient :

Si fait calme, on s'll'ya du vent,  
Si fait caud, ou si fait fred,  
Priaïz l'bouan Guiu, r'merciaïz l'en  
Et vous seraïz, ma fé, d'qué."

Who ever hears in Canada *terjous* for *toujours*, *ch'est* for *c'est*, *gênaïr* for *gêner*, *caud* for *chaud*, *fé* for *foi*, or *d'qué* for *de quoi*? The word *fred*, with the final *d* pronounced, reminds us of the French-Canadian *frette*, and *l'bouan Guiu* recalls the familiar *le bon Dieu*; but who ever hears *taï* for *tranquille*? *Taï* is doubtless from the vulgar Latin *tacêre* for *tacère*, and this again contracted into *taër*, then changed into *tair*, from the participle of which the adjective and the adverb *taït*, spelled in Guernsey *taï*, would arise. The following lines from the poem *Es Tortevâlais* contain some sounds that would puzzle a French-Canadian :

"\_\_\_ à reformair Guernesi,  
En maquière ecclésiastique,  
(Mon Dou, coum chu long mot stique  
Dans la garguette) et vot' part,  
Quiq (tchik) biau jour."

On looking over these poems, I find many familiar expressions, often with a slight difference of pronunciation, such as *et pis*, *à ch't'heure*, *bain*, *j'cré*, and *brin*; but, on the whole, the difference between the insular Norman and the French of Canada is quite marked.

About the end of the 14th, or the beginning of the 15th century, three centuries after the conquest of Normandy by Ile de France, a fuller, Olivier Basselin, wrote, in Normandy, some drinking songs entitled *Vaux-de-Vire*, from the valley of the little river Vire. One of these songs is called *Les Veux*. The first stanza will show that the French of Normandy had, after two

hundred years from the final separation of the Channel Islands from France, become very much what the French of Canada is to-day, but quite different from the old Norman of those islands :

"Si j'ay un amy quand je boy,  
Je voudray qu'il beust avec moy  
Du meilleur vin que l'on peut boire;  
Plus grand bien on ne me peut faire  
Que de bon vin en m'abreuvant."

We have already seen that the peculiarity of pronunciation indicated by the rhyming of *boire* and *faire* marked the speech even of the highest classes of Paris in the 17th century. That a new pronunciation had, at the end of the 17th century, already supplanted that of Louis XIV may be seen from the following sentence taken from the "Caractères" of La Bruyère, first published in 1688 : - "L'air de cour est contagieux : il se prend à V\_\_\_\_<sup>3</sup> comme l'accent normand à Rouen ou à Falaise." It is not the French of Canada, then, that has changed, or become degenerate. It is the French of Paris which, moulded by the growing influence of the lower orders, has abandoned its old pronunciation for one farther removed than that of Canada from its source in the Merovingian Latin and the Latin of Caesar's Roman soldiery. The sounds formerly prevalent were no longer heard in Versailles, but had retained their hold upon the inhabitants of Rouen and Falaise. Philologically viewed, then, the French of Canada is purer than that of Paris. That the Canadian French is not a corruption of the French of Paris may be seen from separate expressions, as well as from pronunciation. I choose but one. Canadians are condemned for the interchange of *chaque* and *chacun*, the former being an adjective and the latter a pronoun, and so not properly interchangeable. A French-Canadian often says, for instance, "Ces boeufs pèsent mille livres chaque" for "mille livres chacun." But an examination of old documents reveals the fact that the distinction between *chaque* and *chacun* is comparatively a novelty. Littré says, "C'est une faute de dire : ces chapeaux ont coûté vingt francs chaque; il faut, vingt francs chacun." The fault here condemned, then, is not peculiar to Canada, and could not have been taken thence to France, and is, therefore, an old expression. Littré gives no quotations to prove the incorrectness of it older than the 16th century. With reference to *chacun*, however, he gives quotations as old as the 12th century to prove that it was then used as *chaque* is now. From the Book of Psalms, p. 178, he quotes the following : "Chesquns huem (homme) est mençungiers;" and, from another authority, he gives "entres ses bras il prist chascun baron," and "Chascuns paiens en baissa le menton."

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<sup>3</sup> Il s'agit de *Versailles*.

Even as late as the 17th century we find La Fontaine saying, (Book II., Fab. 20, p. 99), doubtless after antique fashion :—

".....Comment comprendre  
Qu'aussitôt que chacune soeur  
Ne possédera plus sa part héréditaire,  
Il lui faudra payer sa mère?"

In the "Edit de mai, 1619," of the "Edits, Ordonnances Royaux, Déclarations, et Arrêts du Conseil d'Etat du Roi, concernant le Canada," Louis XIV, speaking of the collection of *dixmes*, says : "Il sera au choix de chacun curé de les lever par ses mains, &c." If the French Canadian idiom is ungrammatical, it is, therefore, rather from changes that have taken place in the opinions of the grammarians of France than from corruption in the French of Canada.

The scientific value of the French language in Canada is not confined to its merely historical relations, but is seen in its illustrations and confirmation of leading philological principles. It is well known that the French language has a peculiar value in philology from the fact that nearly all its changes, from the Latin out of which it sprang, are preserved in documentary form. To some degree, the ends attained by consulting the archives of France are possible from the living pronunciation, idioms, and expressions of Canadian parishes and towns. In the preservation of ancient forms in the living speech of to-day, and in the light thrown by them on various questions of interest in philology, it is not wanting in analogy to the modern Greek.

The laws of linguistic growth may, perhaps, be grouped under the heads of inherent tendencies and outward circumstances.

One of the fundamental principles of linguistic science is that, while "nature is wasteful of time," she "is sparing of effort." The principle is embodied in what is called the law of ease, or of least exertion, and occurs as one phase of inherent tendency. In common conversation expressions are shortened, giving a certain rapidity to the speech. This is proverbially common amongst French-Canadians. An expression very commonly-heard is *'ienque*, as in *'ienqu'un p'tit brin* for *rien qu'un peu*. *Viens ici* becomes in the mouth of almost every mother who calls her child, *'iens 'cite* (pronounced *yin cite*.) For *je crois que c'est ici*, we hear *Je crais (cré) qu'c'est'cite (saite cite)*. For an explanation of the pronunciation of the adverb *ici*, with the sound of *t* at the end of it, we must go back to the 12th century. At that time, the Latin *ecce iste*, after having passed through the intermediate form *ecciste*, had attained the form *icist*, which became in

old French *cest*, and finally, the modern demonstrative adjective *cet*. The form *icist* became, also, *cist*, as now pronounced in Canada. (See Brachet, Hist. F. Gram, p. 113, and Etym. F. Dict. Art. *Ce*). If any one objects to this derivation by saying that the word *cist* in old French was an adjective, while the Canadian word is an adverb, I must remind him of the adage *omnis pars orationis migrat in adverbium*. Besides, Littré, in his "Dictionnaire de la Langue Française," gives the two forms *éci* and *écit* for the adverb *ici*, as used in the old Province of Berri. The derivation of this being the same as that of the demonstrative, the evidence seems to prove that the adjective was subsequently used as an adverb, and that the Canadian word, instead of being a corruption, by the addition in some inexplicable way of a *t*, is but one of many old forms handed down from the earliest times.

Another instance of the operation of the law of ease is found in the expression, *j'ai'té l'qu'ri* for *j'ai été le quérir*, which, in modern French, would be represented by *je suis allé*, or *je viens de le chercher*. Here, it must be noticed, from the elision of the middle vowel of *quérir*, that the form used by the people must be the older form of the verb, which is found without any accent on the *e*, as, in old French, nothing is more marked than the retention, even in shortened words, of the original accentuation. The absence of the French accent on *querir*, as well as the termination *ir*, arose from a previous misplacement of the Latin accent of *quoerere* from the first to the second syllable, thus producing a shortening of the first Latin syllable. We have thus another evidence that Canadian French is not a corruption, but a form singularly attached to its primitive associations.

Other instances of the operation of this law are the use of *aneler* for *agneles*, *bandelière* for *bandoulière*, *lessie* for *lessive*, *ligneu* for *ligneul*, *trèfe* for *trèfle*, *que don* for *écoute donc*, and *aller à la drive* for *aller à la dérive*.

Another source of changes in language which finds illustration in the French of Canada is international intercourse. This comes under the law of circumstances. Languages become strangely mixed in their vocabulary, whether their grammatical structure remains permanent or not; and the language of French Canada is no exception. The conquest of Canada by England has left, and is leaving, its impress on the vocabulary of the French. To a very small degree, the French influences the English, too. I have received letters from teachers in Quebec, in which the French custom of not capitalizing adjectives of nation, when they do not point out persons, was adopted in English. The same practice is visible in printed official documents. The vicinity of

the United States is not without its influence on the French. It produces a peculiar effect to hear such expressions as *la sope, le sink, le coffee, la mop, le washboard, la sauce-pan, la dust-pan, le boil-eur, mouver, cleaner, mopper, la hose, le main-track, le baggage-car, les passengers, le steam-bôte, mettez mon coat, and le steamer.*

On two pages of a little dictionary of French-Canadian barbarisms and solecisms<sup>4</sup>, I counted ten anglicisms in 68 words, and on another page of 30 words there are six anglicisms. These appear in the field of manufactures, law and legislation, mental processes and religion, commerce and social life. Under the head of manufactures are *bogué, cap*, both for the head and the gun, *cracker, drill* for *coutil, factorie, pumps, servir apprentissage*, for *faire, &c., stage* and *sulky*. Under law and legislation may be put *aspersions*, for *diffamations, bill* for *loi, faire des appropriations* for *des octrois, police-man* and *rappel d'une loi*, for *révocation, &c.* Under mental processes and religion occur *être consistant* for *conséquent*, and *entretenir des doutes* for *avoir* or *concevoir, &c.*, and *délivrer un discours* for *prononcer, &c.* Under commerce may be placed *artichaut de Jérusalem* for *topinambour, faire application d'une charge* for *faire la demande, &c., anticiper un succès* for *espérer, &c., barlé* for *orge, cheque* for *bon*, and many others. The adoption of *bar, brandé, gin, peppermint, sherry, and bully*, is very significant. Faucher de St. Maurice in his work with the peculiarly Canadian and musical title *A la Brunante*, page 252, notices also *enshalouer* and *ascertainés*.

While treating of international intercourse, it may not be uninteresting to trace the date of the advent of the common words of French Canada in the term *gazette* (from the Italian *gazetta*) the popular word for *journal*. In it, we trace Canadian terms to the day when Italian influence transformed the manners, thoughts and language of France. In some country parts, however, this word has been abandoned for *papier*, which corresponds better to the English word "paper." This leads to an examination of the influence of education, or the want of it, on the language of French Canada.

The Protestant portion of the population of the Province of Quebec is 171,666 or slightly over 14 per cent of the whole, the majority of the remainder being French. The non-readers over twenty years of age in 1871 were 191,862, or over 35 per cent of the population of the province, and over 64 per cent of the non-readers of the four provinces which originally formed the

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<sup>4</sup> Il s'agit de : ANONYME, *Dictionnaire des barbarismes et des solécismes les plus ordinaires en ce pays, avec le mot propre ou leur signification*, Montréal, Imprimerie Pierre de Cérat, 1855, vi-23 p.

Dominion, these being 299,575. The non-writers were 244,731, or over 45 per cent of the population of the province, and over 59 per cent of the non-writers of the Dominion, these being 412,142. The population<sup>5</sup> under 20 years of age in the Province of Quebec in 1871, was 657,612. Those under 6 years of age were 216,185. The minors over six were, consequently, 441,427. Those between 6 and 16 were 310,875. By the Report of Education for 1872-73, p. XXIV, there were 223,014 scholars at school, or 33 per cent only of the juvenile population, leaving 434,598 of the youth of the province who were receiving no scholastic instruction. If school age is reckoned from 6 to 16, and if those between 16 and 20 are supposed to be engaged in same lucrative employment, there would still be 87,861 children of school age receiving no instruction. These, of course, are principally French. From the exhibit made in Philadelphia, we may learn the character of the education given to those at school, and the prospects for the growth of an intelligent people amongst the French speaking population of Canada. Of 490 newspapers published in the Dominion, Quebec boasts of 115, while Ontario has 175. Of the 115, the French papers number 22. Thus, while the Protestant 14 per cent support 93 newspapers, the French 86 per cent support but 22. Amongst the literary class of the French Canadians, which is larger than that of Ontario, and which, in certain branches, as classics and mathematics, has received a good education, there circulates a mass of native literature not generally believed to exist, and of a very superior character. A visit to the shelves of the MM. Rolland will convince anyone of the truth of this remark. In their catalogue, six pages are filled with the titles of works purely French Canadian, many of them being of great merit and polish. Yet the masses of the French who do read receive for their intellectual food, either works of devotion or novels of the Eugène Sue and the Alexandre Dumas stamp, with works generally of a light and amusing character.

The low condition of popular education is seen in the language itself. It is not difficult to tell when words in popular use are gathered from reading or from hearing. The use of the eye tends to accuracy in the pronunciation, while that of the ear only is subject to many influences tending to produce changes in the forms of words. Syllables are added or dropped, and words with similar sounds but different meanings are confounded. Thus, we have *acculer* for *éculer*, *agrayer* for *agréer*, *s'agripper* for *s'agripper*, *amancher* for *emmancher*, *arêche* for *arête*, *assavoir* for *savoir*, *bicler* for *bigler*, *caneçon* for *caleçon*, *carnas* for *cadenas*, *castonade* for *cassonade*, *chassepareille* for *salsepareille*, &c. We have *patarafe* for *balafre*, a gash in the face, while its

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<sup>5</sup> On lit *populatton* dans le texte.

own meaning is bad writing, an unfinished stroke; and we find *vent derrière* used for *vent arrière*. So we have *prendre un autre rein de vent* for *rumb de vent*, *rein*, a kidney, being used for *rumb*, a rhumb line, in an expression which means to sail on another angle with the meridian. We have, also, *ruelle de veau* for *rouelle de veau*, a round slice of veal, *ruelle* being a lane. In a similar way, find *cousin remâitre de germain*, a perfectly nonsensical expression for *cousin remué de germain*, a cousin removed from german, or the nearest relationship. We have, likewise, the expression *affranchir une nation sauvage*, for *civiliser*, &c., and *affranchir un arbre* for *greffer*, &c. Another word is *tête* for *taie* in *taie d'oreiller*, a pillow-case. Such expressions, even apart from the census returns, reveal the meagre share of that education which trains the eye to distinguish between the correct and the incorrect in the forms of words.

Under the head of education may be placed the very numerous marine terms which changed habits have applied to operations on land, and which must have been first employed on ship-board, or on the shores where the first French immigrants settled, and carried on their business.

An instance is given in *prendre un autre rein de vent*, to sail on another tack. So, when one enters a vehicle, he is said to *embarquer*, if he never saw a vessel or the sea; and when he dismounts from his horse, he is to *débarquer*. The French Canadian is often said, not to *gâter son habit*, but to *abimer* it, or swallow it up in an abyss. The term *caler*, too, which was mentioned before, as being used for the clearing out, or lowering, of a ditch, properly means lowering a sail of a vessel.

Under the head of education, as preserving certain forms of expression, may be mentioned the influence of hereditary superstition and rites. I will notice only two of these, *loup-garou* and *guignolé*. *Garou* is from the mediaeval Latin *gerulphus*, and this again from the old German *were-vulf*, the man wolf. The ancient Gauls believed that at certain seasons, some men became wolves, and roamed at night. By the term *loup-garou*, the French-Canadian of to-day understands a man who, after faithfully serving the devil for seven years, without turning his heart to God, has power to become a roaming wolf, spreading terror amid the simple peasantry. The Gallic superstition had not abandoned Canada twenty-four years ago, at which time I saw one of these men of terror.

For the origin of the term *guignolé*, I am indebted to M. le Mettayer-Masselin de Guichinville. It refers to a custom of singing from door to door, and sometimes collecting alms, on the night of December 31st. M. le Mettayer traces the word to *gui de l'an neuf*, the mistletoe of the new year, which has been corrupted to *guignolé*. At the very sound of it, we are carried back to the times of Druidic worship in the forests of Gaul; and we wonder at the tenacity of old forms of life and speech amongst people who have no knowledge of the origin of the practices they celebrate.

The length of this paper forbids the discussion of the bearing of Canadian French on these problems of physical necessity, of the nature and limits of freedom of will in man, and of the probable future influence of the French language on the destinies of Quebec and the Dominion, which are of interest to us as thinkers and patriots. If thought desirable, these topics may, some day, be made the basis of another paper.

JAMES ROY.

Montreal, Oct. 23, 1877. » (pp. 258-259)