

# Commencement Oration.

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The Pageant of Saint Lusson.

1671.

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AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT OF  
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN.

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We will lift the curtain, if you please, on a wild pageant in the early history of Michigan. The scene is at the Sault Ste. Marie in 1671. But first, we must needs understand the conditions which had brought events to such a pass that a representative of the French king, just at this time and precisely at this spot, had found it meet to proclaim the sovereignty of France over a vast area where France possesses to-day not a rood of territory.

The discovery of America, and discovery in America for over three centuries, were the pursuit of a chimera. The illusion which had brought Columbus across the forbidding waste of water was the vision of a short water-way to Cathay. By the time he was ready for his fourth voyage, it was evident that what had been found was not the historic land which Marco Polo had described, with golden roofed cities and rivers spanned by a hundred bridges, but islands that offered a barrier to the real India. Through this obstacle the coveted channel must be found. On his last voyage Columbus had peeped into every inlet along the shore of Costa Rica in search of such a passage. Ten years later, Balboa had seen from the dividing ridge of the Isthmus the great expanse of the South Sea; with this discovery it seemed probable that what we now call

South America was an independent continent. Magellan after another ten years proved that it was.

Men now asked themselves if there might not be at the north some compensating passage. The Spaniards had already tracked the northern shore of the Gulf of Mexico, and though they had noticed the outflow of a great river, there was no lure of gold in that direction, and they left the secret of the Mississippi to be unfolded by the French from the north a hundred and fifty years later.

Gradually geographers learned to look wistfully to the north, where the English under Cabot had been the first to disclose what proved to be a great gulf. The Portuguese followed in the track of the English; but they did not care to pursue the hidden mysteries of the coast when they found that for the most part it lay beyond the papal line of demarcation which separated their rights from those of Spain. The French cared for no such rights; and they knew that for the fish they could catch there, all Europe offered a market for one day in three, on which flesh was forbidden. To meet this holy demand, the hardy seamen from the Norman and Breton ports, and the Basques from the Bay of Biscay, increased yearly in numbers in the waters contiguous to this northern gulf, until its wonders and allurements had become a familiar story in the maritime towns of France. These adventurous fishermen brought away from this insular region some charts, which in a few cases have come down to us. Their hydrographical surmises gave Cartier the incentive to try the hazards of the watery expanse that lay to the west of Newfoundland. As the doughtiest mariner of his day, Cartier could hardly have vaulted over the rail of any one of these returned fishing craft in the harbor of St. Malo, where he lived, without having his attention called in such maps to the inviting portals of this western mystery. From the first voyage of Cartier in 1534, France had before her nearly a hundred and forty years of trial, before she



was satisfied that she could never reach China by the valley of the St. Lawrence.

The story of this interval is one of pluck and hardihood. The adventurer, the trader, and the priest struggled for the lead; and now it was one, and now the other, who fixed a trading post or built a bark chapel farther than before on the way to Cathay. They pushed west by the Ottawa and Lake Nipissing to Georgian Bay, and yearly the lusty woodsmen led back to Montreal, Three Rivers, and Quebec, a native flotilla of fur-laden canoes. They pushed on to Lake Superior, and one adventurous spirit had found his way thence by stream and portage to Hudson Bay. Here he discovered that English ships were drawing away the Indian traffic in peltries from the French posts. When on his return this enterprising leader proposed to the authorities at Quebec an expedition by sea to wrest this northern vantage ground from their English rivals, he got nothing but jeers and neglect. This treatment sent him to Boston, where he found better encouragement; and forming a partnership with a Yankee skipper, the two ultimately went to London and opened the way to the formation of that great monopoly, the Hudson Bay Company, so long to push the fur-companies of Canada in hardest rivalry. To thwart such impending competition was one of the incentives which sent Saint Luson and Perrot to the Sault Ste. Marie at the time we are considering.

The exploration of the St. Lawrence had begun, as we have seen, with the hope that it might prove a convenient path to India. The westward route by the Ottawa had developed the geography of the upper parts of Lake Huron. It had shown the diverging ways by the Straits of Mackinac and by the Sault. The priest had followed the trader. The Jesuits had made the circuit of Lake Superior, and had produced a marvellously accurate map of that water, making it evident that the way to India could no longer be searched for in that direction. Thus

the limits of discovery thitherward must be emphasized by an act of possession, rendered all the more fitting by the fact that Joliet had but recently opened a new route by Lake Erie and the St. Clair River, which proved that large vessels built above the Falls of Niagara could carry on commerce with the upper lakes.

Ever since the trader Nicolet had pushed up Green Bay and the Fox River, five and thirty years before, and had told to the dying Champlain a story of great waters that he had only failed to reach, his surmises had been undergoing modification under the later reports of Grosseilliers, Allouez, and Marquette, till it became evident that the Indian stories of vast waters beyond the lakes did not refer to a great sea, but to a mighty river. It was no longer doubtful that this potent stream could be reached by portages of moderate extent from Lake Superior and Green Bay; and there were suspicions of other transits near the head of Lake Michigan. As yet no one could say that the southern shore of Erie would not yield other passages; and it is possible that La Salle had already passed to the Ohio, and had believed it the way to this magnified river. It is certain that the Jesuit missionaries in western New York had crossed the divide, and had actually wandered along the northeastern slope of the great Mississippi valley. At the site of the modern Ashland, on Lake Superior, Allouez and Marquette had in turn endeavored to interpret the accounts of the great river which had reached them from fugitive Huron and wandering Sioux; but they had differed in their conclusions. One had fancied the inscrutable river to flow southwest into the Gulf of California; and the other hoped in time to follow it to the Sea of Virginia,—somewhere on the seaboard of our present Southern Atlantic States. Thus it was that this undeveloped geography towards the south suggested possible contact with either Spaniard or English. This gave another reason for the ceremony we are soon to consider.



Towards the north it was evident the chances of an outlet to salt water were no better. The Saguenay had been tried in vain. No one had believed such an egress possible by the Ottawa since the time when Champlain was deceived by the mendacity of Vignan. Peré and Grosseilliers had failed to find a practicable northern route from Lake Superior.

Such had been the outcome, as has been said, of nearly a hundred and forty years of persistent effort, when the vigilant, keen, aspiring mind of the Intendant Talon—the ablest administrator that France ever sent to Canada—grasped the situation. For thirty-five years the monitions of Nicolet had waited for such a fertile mind. It was clear to Talon's conceptions that the great valley of the lakes was sure to France, through the possession of its natural waterways. Nature had rendered easily accessible, by a system of low dividing ridges, the vast adjacent valleys towards the north and the south, and Talon had the ambition to occupy them. It mattered little to him if the English were on Hudson Bay, provided he could secure the upper waters of its tributaries. It mattered little to him if the great valley of the Mississippi stretched to Spanish settlements on the Pacific, or to English colonies on the Atlantic, if he could be the first to carry the French lilies from its upper reaches to the sea.

In this frame of mind Talon organized the expedition whose crowning act may interest us to-day. To give dignity to the movement he selected a gentleman to lead it, Daumont de Saint Lusson; but there was joined with him the most capable master in woodcraft in all New France, Nicholas Perrot, an expert talker in the Indian tongues. He could read as well as talk, which few of his class could do.

It was in the latter half of 1670 that Saint Lusson with his little party left Quebec. They wintered at the Manatoulin islands. Here during the weary weeks their plans were set in order, so that when the spring opened, messen-

gers were ready to start for the northern tribes, bearing invitations to attend in the early summer at the Sault, for a converse with the whites. The movements started, Perrot himself set out for Green Bay. His mission was to ingratiate himself with the tribes of that region, and to induce them to join their northern kindred in the great convocation. By the last of April, 1671, Perrot had assembled his Indian friends, representing all the tribes of the Green Bay country, and an immense flotilla of canoes moved onward towards the Sault. On the 5th of May they reached their destination, and found that Saint Luson with his little party of Frenchmen had already arrived. The messengers who had been sent to the boreal parts had done their work, and gradually tribe after tribe came upon the scene. Not only these, but the opening summer had brought other tribes, whom the messengers had not reached, drawn hither to profit by the fishing season. Scattered around in little colonies of kinship, the lodges of the savages dotted the ground. The warriors squatted in groups along the sloping ground, and passing hither among them went the welcoming whites,—placeman, priest, and trader,—losing no occasion to impress upon all, the dignity of their coming purpose and the masterful sovereignty of the French king.

There was one among the four or five black robes, who made part of the attending whites, who was conspicuous for his hoary years,—a man now much beyond his threescore and ten, but still undaunted at the hardships of the wilderness. One would like to take him aside and listen to the thoughts already suggested to him by the coming ceremonial. Let us in our imagination sit here beneath this tree, scattering its scent of early summer, and listen to the story which we may be permitted to draw from the lips of Gabriel Dreuilletes.

A score of years had passed since he was ministering to the Abenakis among the sources of the Kennebec. At that time rumors were constantly reaching him of the savage



inroads which the Iroquois were making along the St. Lawrence, so that even the shores of Hudson Bay, whither the fugitive Montagnais had fled, had not placed these frightened allies of the French beyond the reach of the implacable confederates. All these years of crouching suspense throughout Canada were largely the result of Champlain's reckless provocations of the Mohawks forty years before; and the inevitable dooming of the Hurons followed. The Iroquois fell upon the Huron villages and relentlessly swept away savage and Jesuit. In the despair which followed, the conscious Abenakis felt that their turn would come next; and the French in Quebec knew not where to look for succor but to the neighboring New England.

It marks the supineness which settled upon the Canadians at this time that they sought to enlist the English assistance, not only by offering reciprocity of trade, but also by yielding to New England's pretensions in respect to territorial bounds. There had been little of this self-restraint when Dreuilletes had been sent to the Abenakis; for he had been directed not only to convert them, but to make sure of their friendship in case of an outbreak with the English,—at least, such is the admission of Charlevoix.

Whether the territory of the Abenakis was properly within the jurisdiction of the French or that of Plymouth, which had chartered rights on the Kennebec, depended on the limits of Acadia; and this was then and for a long time afterwards, in dispute between the two Crowns.

All such rival claims were for the instant forgotten when the governor of Quebec drew up a proposal for alliance, and pressed the right of the Abenakis to English protection, on the ground that they were really the wards of the Plymouth colony. With such an argument outlined by his superior, Dreuilletes was ordered to leave his catechumens and make his way to Boston. Descending the Kennebec, and coming to the trading post which the Plymouth people maintained there, near the site of the mod-

ern Augusta, the priest encountered the hearty, whole-souled commander of the post, a man of good English gentry blood, John Winslow, and representing the authority of that colony. Dreuilletes laid his purpose before him. Winslow, if we may believe the Jesuit's own narrative, was eager to help on an alliance; and the two men made the most of the promptings of that good fellowship sprung from a jovial intercourse which neither was loath to share. Down the Kennebec they went, and by water along the coast, till they found it best to seek the shore and travel by land. It was a drear December evening when the companions were rowed across to the northern point of the Boston peninsula.

Here the priest was received with the consideration due to his ambassadorial character. The Puritan statutes that placed a Jesuit beyond the pale of protection were put in abeyance. A notable merchant of the town—a man who came as near being a godless cosmopolitan as the Puritan habits would permit—opened his house to the priest and gave him a key to a chamber where he could undisturbed arrange his holy vessels and say his masses.

The next day Dreuilletes was conducted by Winslow to Governor Dudley. Stern Puritan as the chief magistrate was, he had in his younger days fought under Henry of Navarre. Dreuilletes thought the sound of the Gallic tongue might warm the Governor to something more than stately courtesy; but the grim surroundings had little in accord with the sunny France of the Puritan's youth, and the magistrate insisted upon the ungracious intervention of an interpreter.

So weighty a question as was propounded, the ambassador was made to understand, must be referred to the consideration of the commissioners of the United Colonies. The ambassador was further commended to the government at Plymouth, meanwhile, since that colony was much more intimately concerned than the Bay Colony with the welfare of the Abenakis. So Winslow passed on



with Dreuilletes to Plymouth; and the priest tells us how courteous was the reception which the Pilgrims accorded to him.

It is among the most striking contrasts in American history to find this Jesuit priest at Plymouth Rock, holding converse with the Pilgrim magistrates. The account which he has left to us of this visit is scant, but it includes a notice of the dinner which Governor Bradford gave him on a Friday, when, out of respect to his guest's religion, the table was set with fish alone. It would be interesting to know whom Bradford summoned to share with him and his visitor this frugal repast in that December day of 1650. Whom could he have selected to discuss with him the momentous question which Dreuilletes had proposed? Bradford could hardly have failed to send across the bay to the Duxbury shore to summon that chief of his counsellors when matters of war were in question, the fiery little Pilgrim soldier, Myles Standish. It does no violence to probability to imagine this group, after the governor's hospitable table had been left, strolling up the path that led directly from the governor's house to the Burial Hill that overtopped the village. Here, on the bulwarks of the timber fort which crowned the eminence, we can picture them as they continued their talk.

It was a suggestive knot of men indeed. Bradford steadily, from the day when he signed the compact of self-government in the cabin of the "Mayflower," had grown gray in the service of the little colony; and now that Winthrop of Massachusetts was dead, there was no one in New England territory more revered than he,—a grave, learned man, and one who knew the traditions and purposes of the Pilgrim Church from its earliest days in the Yorkshire fields. Let us behold him here upon the ramparted roof of the fort, sweeping his hand over the country which lay spread out beneath, wrapped in the winter's snow. He could have impressed upon the Jesuit mind how the little colony had succeeded in living at peace with the neigh-

boring savages. "On yonder hill," he could say, "and before we had been here many weeks, we met the sachem of this religion; and then and there, without a hostile weapon in our hands, we entered upon a pact of fellowship which neither of us have broken from that day to this, now going on thirty years."

The Jesuit might well reply: "Our people had scarcely seated themselves in Quebec when we slew the Iroquois; and for fourscore years we have suffered from their bloody reprisals; and that we may have no more of them, I have come to ask your help."

The governor shook his head. "The Iroquois have never wronged us: why should we wrong them? We cannot fight, unless we have reason for it;" and he turned his eyes upon Myles Standish.

One would like to know, as the Jesuit's gaze followed that of Bradford, and the eyes of the priest met those of that redoubtable soldier, if there was any token of sympathy between them that the governor did or did not comprehend. Standish in his early life, fighting as a soldier of fortune in the Low Countries, had not always marshalled reasons for wielding his sword; and it was not unwittingly that Bradford now turned his glance upon his associate. As a scion of a Catholic family in Lancashire, Standish had never renounced, so far as any one has been able to discover, the religion that blessed his cradle. So far also as can be learned, his associates in Plymouth had never bound him to their own covenant of faith. He and they had got on together through the natural dependence which was placed on him as the captain of their little host and as a counsellor in their public affairs. If there was any betrayal by Standish of an inherited faith, the Jesuit does not record it. As the two looked across the bay to that eminence crowned to-day by the statue of this Pilgrim soldier, the priest could but wonder at that confidence in the pact with Massasoit which gave to Standish's home, so far remote from the settlements, a security that had never been possible on the St. Lawrence.



Hardly a less instructive scene was that a few days later, when Dreuilletes, returning to Boston, stopped for the night at the house of the Apostle Eliot. What visions of the savage pupils, gathered about the hearth of Eliot, must have come back to him over the gulf of twenty years, sitting now, as we have fancied, amid this dusky throng congregated at the Sault! That Protestant guide to the Massachusetts Indians was at the time of Dreuilletes' visit organizing his native church at Natick; and we can easily picture the two missionaries placing their experiences in comparison, and discussing the ways of reaching the savage consciousness. Eliot might have shown to his guest his translation of the Scriptures into the Indian speech, already begun. Some years before this visit was recalled the Natick Bible had already been put in type by an Indian convert under the shadow of Harvard College. One can easily see, from the Jesuit's account of this intercourse, that it had raised feelings of respect, and perhaps even of affection, between the Catholic and the Protestant. Dreuilletes mentions how Eliot urged him to pass the winter with him; but the Jesuit could get as yet no definite reply from the commissioners of the United Colonies, and hastened back to Quebec. He repeated his visit the next summer, when he met these higher authorities at their gathering in Hartford.

During these two visits, covering the length and breadth of New England, this Jesuit ambassador, coming, not as a woodpecker that looketh for the rot, had not failed, as he tells us, to remark upon the homely thrift and vitality of a colonial life so different from what he had known in Canada. He found bridges to cross streams. He saw forges blazing where the deft craftsman worked the iron of the bogs. He heard the clatter of saw mills. He noted the Yorkshire immigrant weaving cotton which had been brought from Barbadoes. He listened everywhere to the *swish* of a scythe which a New England farmer had invented. He quaffed along the seaboard,

wherever there was a rope-walk, the healing odor of the tar which their brigantines had brought from other coasts. He saw sheep dotting the hill-side, and cattle everywhere browsing in the pastures. Colts drooped their heads over the fences as he passed, and the farmer told him that the next year he should send them to the West Indies in payment for molasses. The merchants of Boston explained their ventures to St. Kitts, Fayal, and Bilboa. He found that strangers were admitted to the benefits of trade, and the exclusiveness of the Puritan rule was already relaxing, and giving way to broader sympathies. He saw the new pine tree shillings, coined in defiance of the royal prerogative,—one of the signs of that New England independence, which was always wary. The colonial politicians told him how a stray sow, reminding him of the wolf that suckled the infant Rome, had started a warm discussion, which ended, as befitted their English blood, in a stubborn adherence to a dual chamber in their legislative concerns. He saw that in not forgetting the warning of Moses to divide their soil among as great a number of citizens as was possible, they had established their state upon a foundation that seigneuries could not supply.

Such were the strange, suggestive lessons of the life to which he was not used. He recalled what he had seen to the authorities at Quebec on his return. He must have dwell upon them by the aid of a still vivid memory, as we observe him now at the Sault. He was, so far as we can discover, the only one of that little band of Frenchmen, gathered about Saint Luson, who knew enough of these English, whom they looked forward to encounter, to divine the outcome of that trial of endurance and contention which they planned on the morrow to invite. Saint Luson knew that to make good the territorial pretensions of his countrymen involved the occupation of the great valley of the Mississippi, wherein they could hardly hope to avoid a conflict, sooner or later, with these same English.

Let us look for a moment at the condition of that



English race along the Atlantic seaboard in this year of grace 1671, twenty years after Dreuilletes had been among them in New England. The contrast to New France was even greater than the Jesuit had found it. Massachusetts had just emerged triumphant from an inquisitorial contest with the Home Government, and she had given her perverted charter a new life. Connecticut had become consolidated with New Haven, under a charter yet to be heard of in the northwest. While the fur-trade was of importance in Maine and the Connecticut valley, it contributed but a small share to the prosperity of the people. The streams that in Canada made canoe-paths in the search for peltries thwarted the thrift of the ploughman; but the streames in New England, by furnishing power, made manufactures the handmaid of agriculture. If the New Englander failed in woodcraft, as compared with the Canadian, he had no superior on the sea. There is nothing like a life on the North Atlantic to try the intrepidity of a sailor. The New Englander had learned to build as fine vessels as floated. They bore the English flag everywhere, to distances far greater than the lilies of France had been born along the lakes. These ships carried to England the finest masts in the world for the equipment of the royal navy. Boston, which in Dreuilletes' time engrossed almost all the carrying trade of New England, now shared it with port after port along the marvelously indented coast. They fed Virginia and the Southern colonies out of a glaciated soil that in these later days, in competition with the West, is checkered with abandoned farms. They carried food to the fishing fleet of all nations which frequented the Grand Banks. They took cargoes of pipe-staves to every wine-producing country of the world. They carried wool to Bordeaux, and brought home the French linens. They went for sugar to the West Indies, and sent rum to Guinea and Madagascar. Boston, with her twenty-five hundred houses, had grown to be the finest town in North America.

Along the line of the Mohawk and the Hudson there was a fusion of English and Dutch that promised well, and nearer Manhattan, the Huguenot blood, which they scorned in Quebec, was already beginning to add a fine fibre to the race. This amalgamated folk in New York afforded the only considerable rivals in the fur-trade which the French had yet found south of the St. Lawrence. Farther south on the Jersey shore an infusion of New England blood was developing agriculture and moulding the laws. On the Chesapeake and by the tide-water of Virginia there was quite a different type of Englishman, mixed with Scotch and German. They knew little of commerce. Boston ships took away their tobacco. They hardly knew what a town was, and there were few among them that lived by handicrafts; but they were good woodsmen, and the French had more to fear from them in the near future than from any others. Governor Berkley had sent Lederer along the Appalachian slopes, and here and there he had climbed to a summit and looked over into the great valley beyond the hills; but there were very vague notions of its extent. For twenty years there had been a popular map circulated in England among intending immigrants to Virginia, which seemed to imply that the Pacific flowed wholly over what we now know as the valley of the Mississippi—so little knowledge had the discoveries of the French imparted to their neighbors across the Channel.

In the modern Carolina there was a proprietary government jealously guarding a charter which carried its western bounds to the South Sea, wherever it might be. These proprietors had drawn to the soil a strange conglomeration of spirits upon whom it was desired to impress the baronial ideals of John Locke,—dissenters from Virginia, wanderers from Barbadoes, and restless New Englanders. This ill-assorted people were divided into planters, traders and hunters.

It was a question, and a serious one to the French, how long this Appalachian range would confine to the



Atlantic slope this attenuated line of English from Massachusetts Bay to Carolina. There were grave apprehensions at Quebec when Talon had organized the expedition of Saint Luson. The Intendant could but see that New France was flanked on the north by the English at Hudson Bay, and (now that New Amsterdam had fallen) by the same English on the south. Nevertheless, Talon had fair ground to expect that the English advance towards the west would be delayed so long as commerce and agriculture kept the settlers busy, and so long as the eastern slopes of the mountains were broad enough to sustain their population. It was thus upon the mercantile thrift and farming instincts of the English colonists that the French could best depend for unopposed occupation of the great valley of the Mississippi. Charlevoix at a later day comprehended this exactly. The settlers in New York had indeed succeeded to the Iroquois alliance which the Dutch had fostered, and it was certain that in the Seneca country there were small obstacles to their entering the great valley, if they should push along the affluents of the Ohio; but there was as yet no disposition to such enterprise.

It has been said that no one in this little pioneer band of the French at the Sault understood the latent force of the English so well as the Dreuilletes, or comprehended so eagerly what it could accomplish if once it broke the mountain barrier. He tells us how the sturdy concentration of New England had impressed him in her sons who ploughed the land and furrowed the seas with equal virility. He had contrasted this steady purpose with the wild restlessness that shot the rapids of the Canadian rivers. The men who took rum, cod-fish and clapboards across the turbulent waters to Spain, Portugal, and the West Indies, and were bronzed in the salt air, were the fathers of families. The Canadian *voyageurs* shunned the settlement, for fear that they might be compelled to marry. "Teach people their duties," says Diogenes in Landor, "and they will know their interests." The Massachusetts town-

meeting gave an inspiration that was absolutely wanting in the feudal seigneuries of Montreal and Quebec. Church-membership as a condition of freemanship brought religion to the core of every-day life. The black-robed priests and white nuns of New France created a class. These are things which Dreuilletes had seen and could hardly have forgotten, and he may well have asked himself if these alien people and their kindred were long to be hemmed in by the Appalachians? It has often been a boast of the historians of New France that while their pioneers were pushing from Gaspé to the western verge of Superior, the English were content to keep within smell of tide-water. But they forget that it is not wandering that subdues the earth. Carrying trinkets to the Indians and taking his skins in exchange, laid open the water ways, but it did not develop the country. The Home Government of France put stringent requirements upon the Canadian settlers to keep within the protection which the palisaded posts could extend. Agriculture spoiled the country for the beaver and the musquash, and the well-being of the colony was sacrificed to the gain of the fur companies. Champlain had looked forward with apprehension to a policy which discouraged family life and farmsteads. The fact was, that the more extended New France became, the weaker she grew. The self-centring of New England prepared her in due time for that western movement when her tillers of the soil could make hospitable a region that France had only unfolded to geography. The New England blood of Michigan tells the story to-day.

But I have kept you too long from this significant scene at the Sault. It was on the morning of the 14th of June, 1671, when Saint Lussen formed his little band of followers at his camp beside the rapids, arrayed in what of splendor they had brought into the wilderness, and bearing their newly burnished arms. With their vestments cleansed and gathered about them, four Jesuits walked at the head of the line. They were Dablon, the spiritual



head of these distant missions; Allouez, whom we have encountered at Ashland Bay; André, his companion; and Dreuilletes, whose conscious being we have been trying to lay bare. Their names stand still as they wrote them in official attestation on the instrument which records the proceedings of which they were a part. With solemn step Saint Lussou led his compatriots to a little knoll neighboring to the palisade of the Jesuits. Here a huge cross of wood had been made ready, and lay upon the ground. A vast throng of many-tinted Indians, which had hovered about the little column on its way, spread over the near ground, and formed a ragged circle about the spot. Some of the savages stood, with the breezes from the Sault fanning their plumes; others crouched on the soil as only Indians can; and here and there, on little undulations of the ground, the more supple fell into picturesque groups, giving a better view to those who stood behind. All along this dusky horde, set off with the saffron and vermilion of the forest adornments, there was the glistening jet of curious eyes.

The Frenchmen were grouped in the centre about the prostrate cross. Father Dablon stepped forward, and with outstretched arms sanctified it with a solemn blessing. At a sign from Saint Lussou, some stalwart shoulders were placed beneath the holy wood, and the huge symbol of redemption lifted its head slowly in the air, till its foot fell at last into the cavity which had been made for it. As the dull thud of the impact fell on the eager ears, every Frenchman's cap was off. While the earth was thrown about the cross, their voices rose in unison in that grand old seventh-century hymn, the *Vexilla Regis*. A graver in Paris had cut the royal arms in conventional style on a metal plate, and Colbert had taken care that this token of possession was sent to Talon. By him it had been committed to Saint Lussou. A cedar post had been erected close to the cross; and while this plate was fastened to it, the

*Exaudiat* was chanted, and one of the priests muttered a prayer for the king.

There was a rustle among the crowding savages, with eyes and ears bent still closer upon the great man before them who represented the majesty of France. Saint Luson walked conspicuously to the front, with a sword stretched in one hand, and a crumbling turf of earth extended in the other. He then spoke in words something like these:—

“In the name of the most high and redoubtable sovereign, Louis the Fourteenth, Christian King of France and Navarre, I now take possession of all these lakes, straits, rivers, islands, and regions lying adjacent thereto, whether as yet visited by my subjects or unvisited; whether stretching to the sea at the north or at the west, or on the opposite side extending to the South Sea. And I declare to all the people inhabiting this wide country that they now become my vassals, and must obey my laws and customs. I promise to protect them against all enemies. I declare to all other princes and potentates of whatever rank, and I warn their subjects, that they are denied forever seizing upon or settling within these circumjacent seas, except it be the pleasure of myself or viceroys to permit them. I declare that I will resent and punish any such presumption. *Vive le Roy!*”

The responsive shouts of the followers of Saint Luson were drowned in the volleys of their guns and by the yelps of the capering savages.

As soon as silence could be restored, Father Allouez stepped forward to address those unwitting vassals of the woods. He told them how important the work was in which they had just assisted. He pointed to the cross, and reminded them of the story which it signified, and which he had so often rehearsed. He pointed to the blazon of the royal arms, and told them that they stood for the sovereignty of a great lord of the earth, whose grandeur was as the tall oak compared with the grass that bent beneath



their moccasins. He referred to the great man at Quebec who represented this mighty king, and told them that he was but one of this imperial master's ten thousand powerful captains. "I am going on the war-path, cries this mighty king, and every one of these ten thousand captains," shouted Allouez, "starts off with a hundred warriors in his train. They may go by sea," said the priest again, "in such ships as you have seen at Quebec, not in canoes like yours, holding at the most only ten men, but in vessels that will carry, if need be, as many thousand. They may go by land; and it would take a steadfast foot to pass along their ranks for more than twenty leagues. When the earth trembles, and it thunders, and the air is on fire, it is our king attacking his enemies. The blood of those he kills flows in streams, and men do not say how many scalps he has taken, but how large is this river of blood. So terrible is he that nations no longer war with him, but fall prostrate when he looks. His word is the law of the world.

"You have a few sacks of corn, a hatchet or two, and call yourself rich. He possesses cities in number beyond the members of your tribe, a city for a man. His own palace is longer than from here to the top of the Sault, and the tallest trees would not reach its roof. He has a family in it more numerous than the people in one of your towns."

In such an atmosphere of rhetorical smoke, the swarthy savages grunted and wrapped themselves in amazement. The French had cast a die that foreboded they knew not what. One at least among them, in his forecast for the future, might have ventured a suspicion in accordance with the truth that not the race of Dablon and of Tolon, but that of Eliot and Bradford, would yet possess these magnificent realms of the earth.

One thing was certainly apparent at the moment. The French could not long delay to try, at least, to make good the grandeur of their hopes. The rugged Frontenac had

but just arrived at Quebec, and the burden was his. The story of the discovery of the Mississippi by Joliet and Marquette, is not necessary to dwell upon further to say that it made it sure how by the Wisconsin or the Illinois one could float, not to the Atlantic or Pacific, but to the Gulf of Mexico.

Instigated by this success, and impelled by a desire to connect by a great route the two chief portals of the continent, the Gulfs of St. Lawrence and Mexico, La Salle entered upon his scheme of developing the great valley. In a few years he succeeded in erecting his emblems of occupation on one of the deltas at the mouth of the great river. It had taken nearly a hundred and fifty years to complete the cordon since Cartier had raised his cross at Gaspè. To give something like detail to these claims, Duluth had also announced possession among the Sioux, and Hennepin had followed the reaches of the Upper Mississippi.

Meanwhile the English were preparing for the inevitable invasion. They began by treating with Iroquois for mutual advantages; and as those confederates drove their enemies along the southern shores of Lake Erie, and even pushed them beyond Lake Michigan, there were English traders from Albany and the East to follow not far in their rear. The conflict which the French had sustained with the Iroquois along the St. Lawrence, they now found they must repeat on the Illinois and the Mississippi.

Ever since La Salle had closed the Mississippi to the Spaniards by his visit to the deltas, it had been the purpose of the French to patrol, as it were, the entire line of transit from the Gulf to the Sault, with fortified posts at salient points; and later by continuing this line up the Ohio, to connect Ontario and the St. Lawrence Gulf by a similar circuit. These English incursions on the trail of the Iroquois were but the beginning of a counter-movement on their part. The movement, however, found many checks. Phips failed at Quebec; Frontenac dealt his blows effectively along the northern bounds of



New England and New York; while Perrot took formal occupation of the country west of Superior, and Cadillac seized the straits at Detroit and defied any hostile inroad upon the upper lakes.

The treaty of Ryswick in 1697 had left France in formal possession of the great valley; but her occupation was more in name than in power. The ice-locked channels of the lakes cut them off from Quebec for a large part of the year, and it was far easier for the settlers on the Illinois to drift toward the Gulf than for canoe or bateau to push up against the current.

Meanwhile the English and Scotch traders were following the lateral valleys everywhere. When the French king farmed out the Indian trade of the great watershed to Crozat, his agents complained that they encountered the trading adventurers from over the mountains. These intruders went by ways that were known to them; but Spotswood of Virginia was not behindhand in sending his rangers along the mountain summits to inspect the passes.

The question became serious when by the treaty of Utrecht, in 1713, the French monarch had acknowledged the subjection of the Iroquois to the English; for the English interpreted it to mean that it gave them jurisdiction, not only throughout the lands actually occupied by the confederacy, but that it established the English rule over all the regions west and south, where the Iroquois warriors had driven its occupants. This claim was made on the plea that such territory was conquered territory of the Iroquois, and included in the surrender of the confederates. Shortly afterwards Spotswood of Virginia started on a reconnoissance that boded no good to the French. He led his knights of the Golden Spur over the mountains, and his merry company shouted and sang in triumph on the slopes of the Great Valley. It was the hindered spirit of the Virginians let loose, and nowhere else, along the imposing barrier from the Catskills to northern Alabama, was there a path over the passes so easy and unentangled

as this which Spotswood had found. It was thus by the valley of the Shenandoah that the songs and footfalls of rollicking Virginians mingled with the splashes of the upper affluents of the Tennessee, and the way was opened for the coming occupation of the region south of the Ohio by the Anglo-German and Scotch Irish pioneers from the valley of Virginia. The men of New York were not far behind. They planted a post at Oswego, and began to intercept the traders from Quebec. The French attempted a flank movement by establishing posts on Lake Champlain and at Niagara; but the purpose of the English was steady. By treaty after treaty they acquired more and more what it served their purpose to call the rights of the Iroquois. This paper conquest was as good as completed in the treaty signed in 1744 at Lancaster in Pennsylvania. More active aggressions followed. All along the Ohio the cabin of the English trader flaunted the British flag; and the conflict could not longer be put off when the Ohio Company, in 1750, received its ample grants, throughout a region where a French emissary from Quebec had here and there buried his engraved plates, setting forth the claims of his royal master. Cèloron tells us that he crossed from Lake Erie by the Chautauqua portage, and following down the streams, he found that the English packman was everywhere in advance.

The treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1748, was but a pretense of peace. Both sides were given time under it to prepare for the struggle. It was not long before Charles Townshend in the English Parliament was crying that the time had come. Virginia took the first warlike step in sending a party to build a fort at the forks of the Ohio, just a time when France gave her last pledge along the Mississippi in the reconstruction of Fort Chartres.

Events had now begun to move rapidly, and it fell to Washington's share to fire the first shot in the long war which reached a decision on the Plains of Abraham; and within two years more the lily flag had come down at



Detroit and Mackinac. The Appalachians had disappeared more completely than the Pyrenees in the vision of Louis the Fourteenth. It had taken ninety years from the time when Saint Lusson threw down the gage, for the meteor flag to reach the Sault. Dreuillettes, an old man of eighty-eight, had fallen into his grave at Quebec long before the time when English courage and constancy, which he had so long ago recognized, thus reached its natural goal. The negotiations for a confirmed peace at Paris in 1763 were hardly less cardinal than the defeat of Montcalm at Quebec.

It may excite a smile to-day that Canada should be weighed in the balance against Guadeloupe; but the decision as to which of the two dependencies France should be permitted to retain, was long delayed. The English press teemed with pamphlets in advocacy of one or the other; and not the least effective of them was one by Franklin, urging the retention of Canada as the only security for a peaceful future. The argument for Guadeloupe was not without wisdom in the light of coming events. If the standing menace of Frenchmen on their borders should be removed, it was held that the English colonists would have opportunities to develop independence of the mother-country. But that future does not concern us now, while we ask: To what condition had New France been reduced? She had already secretly anticipated the inevitable, and yielded everything beyond the Mississippi to Spain; and of all the vast domain, bounded by the circumjacent oceans, which she had proudly claimed at the Sault ninety two years before, nothing was left but two little islands on the coast of Newfoundland, piteously awarded to her as fishing stations to secure her food on the fast days of her religion. New France, an empire without a nation, had disappeared.