

**HAND-BOOK FOR THE
CITY OF MONTREAL
AND ITS ENVIRONS**

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Hand-Book for the City of Montreal and Its Environs by S. E. Dawson

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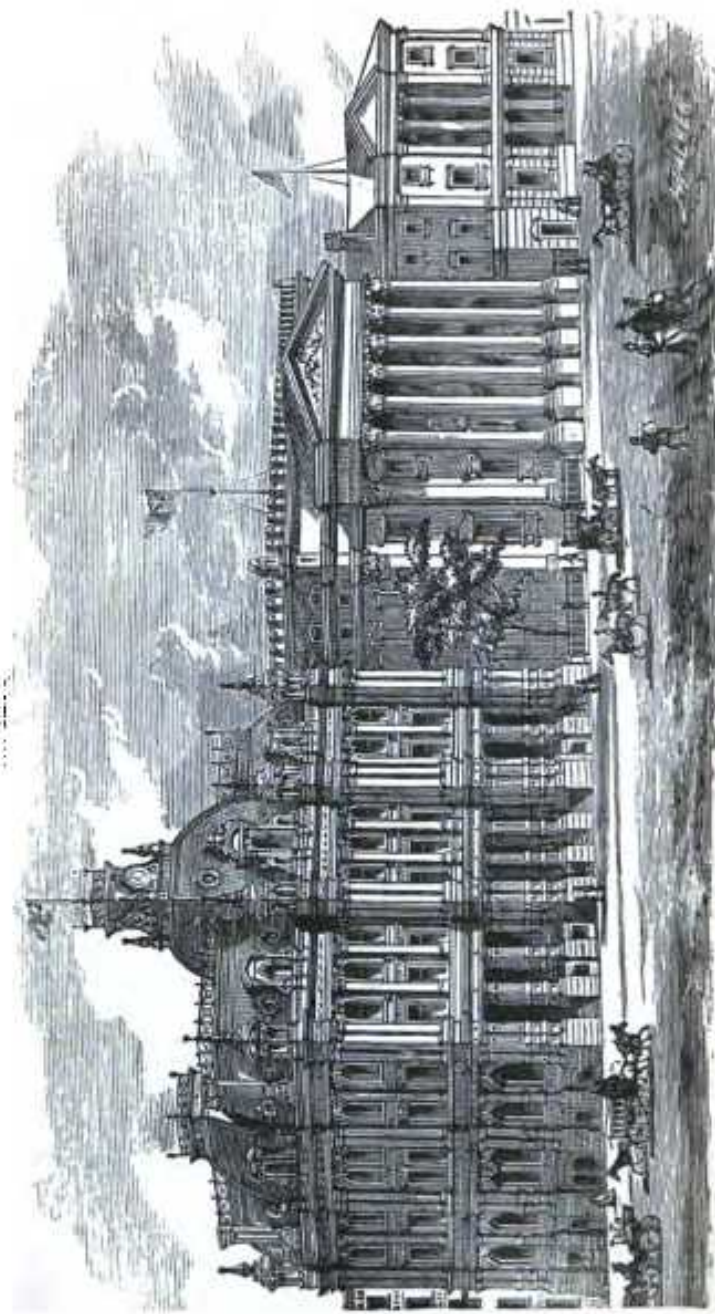
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THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC.

The province of Quebec is the oldest by far of all the provinces of the Confederation. It has always had for strangers a singular charm, and the history of its early days surpasses in interest that of any other colony or province in America. Many historians, native and foreign, have endeavoured to do justice to the romantic incidents of those early times, and the traveller who may be curious to learn further of them would do well to consult the histories of Miles, Ferland, Garneau, and especially the glowing pages of Francis Parkman. Our task is upon the lower levels of geography and statistics, and we can do little more than indicate the authorities which lie ready to the hand of any inquirer.

The northern boundary of the province of Quebec is the height of land which divides the waters flowing northwards into Hudson's Bay from those which flow into the St. Lawrence. This line continues westwards until it reaches a point forty-five miles due north of Lake Temiscaming, on the Ottawa. Thence the western boundary starts, and, proceeding due southwards, it passes through the lake and

follows the mid-channel of the Ottawa river until it reaches the village of Point Fortune, upon the western bank. There leaving the Ottawa, the western boundary strikes through the country to the St. Lawrence, at River Beaudette. This corner, which would seem properly to belong to Ontario, was reserved to the ancient province of Quebec, because, when Ontario, or Upper Canada, was separated in 1791 as a distinct province, the Seigniories of Vaudreuil, Nouvelle Longueuil, Soulanges, and Rigaud had been erected by the King of France, and were settled by Frenchmen, whose existing laws and customs the English Government, as bound by the Act of 1774, respected. In the comparatively unsettled country to the west, the province of Ontario was created under English laws, and colonized by English-speaking settlers.

Upon the south, Quebec is bounded by the line of 45° north latitude, until it reaches New Hampshire, when, turning to the north-east, the boundary line follows a meandering course until it reaches the province of New Brunswick. This part of the boundary is indescribable by the pen, and the principles by which it was traced are unknown to colonists. It disfigures the map upon which it remains, a continual witness to the imbecility of Lord Ashburton, and the most serious of the many Imperial capitulations in North America. A glance at the map will satisfy the intelligent tourist as to the profound incapacity of the Imperial negotiators.

Upon the east, the Islands of Anticosti and the Magdalen Group are within the Government of Quebec. A line drawn due north from Anse au Sablon, near the Straits of Belleisle, on the Labrador coast, until it intersects the northern boundary, marks the eastern limit of the province. The remaining portion of Labrador belongs to Newfoundland.

The physical features of Quebec which strike the tourist are those of an alluvial plain stretching upon both sides of the River St. Lawrence, at varying distances, to the Laurentian Mountains on the north, and the Notre Dame, and Green Mountains, and the Adirondacks on the south. The first named range approach the shores of the Lower St. Lawrence very closely, and add a solemn and impressive grandeur to the scenery. Near Quebec they recede, and the rich and fertile valley continuously opens out, widening to the westward to the broad level country of Ontario. From the Montreal Mountain, on a clear day, these opposing ranges can be seen in the blue distance on the north and south, separated by the wide stretch of alluvial soil below. The Laurentian chain of mountains nowhere attains to a very great height. Mont Eboulemens, on the St. Lawrence, is 2,547 feet high. Some of the ridges farther in the interior, are stated to be 4,000 feet. Trembling Mountain, in the county of Argenteuil, is given by the officers of the Geological Survey as 2,060 feet, but generally the height does not exceed 1,500 feet. The whole of the Laurentian country,

as far as the watershed of Hudson's Bay, consists geologically of early crystalline rocks. The hills are all worn into rounded forms; for this is the most ancient part of the continent of America. The waves of the Silurian sea washed against these hills when but two small islands represented the remaining part of the present continent. In the crystalline limestones of this region lived the *Eozoon Canadense*, earliest of all known forms of animal life. In the same limestones graphite frequently occurs, and the whole Laurentian formation abounds in iron ores of great purity. The country is studded with innumerable lakes, tempting the sportsman with their abundance of fish. Over a thousand lakes are laid down in the published maps of this region, and these are the never-failing sources of many large rivers; for all the largest tributaries of the St. Lawrence are from the north. In the valleys of these countless streams and lakes are tracts of fertile land, while the dense forest which covers it supplies the timber which is the chief export of Quebec.

South of the St. Lawrence the Notre Dame Mountains follow the shore of the river nearly as far as Father Point, whence, turning to the south-west, they at last mingle with the Green Mountains of Vermont. They attain in some places a height of 3,000 to 4,000 feet. The highest points are near the Lower St. Lawrence, and are sure to attract the attention of a stranger entering by the river. The bold bluffs of Cape Chatte and St. Anne are very

striking objects from the deck of a steamer, for the usual course of the mail ships is close to this most rugged shore. The geological structure of these hills is later than that of the Laurentides, and has been considered, together with the country between them and the St. Lawrence, to belong to the base of the Silurian system. The Chaudière river, in whose stream gold is found in paying quantities, takes its rise in these hills; and in this formation the copper mines of Quebec are chiefly found. The character of the country from the river to their base is level and fertile, but as the hills are approached the scenery becomes very varied and rugged.

The province of Quebec is a land abounding in large rivers. The great St. Lawrence flows through it with a breadth varying from one mile, a little above Montreal, to twenty miles at Cacouna, and forty miles near Point des Monts, which may be considered as the entrance to the Gulf. Flowing into it from the north, we have space to particularise only the larger streams. The gloomy Saguenay, from 300 to 400 miles long; the St. Maurice, which has a still longer course; the Ottawa, nearly 600 miles, with its tributaries—the Gatineau, the Lièvre and the Rouge—all three very large streams. From the south, the Richelieu, a large and beautiful river, bringing the waters of Lakes George and Champlain; the Chaudière, and the St. Francis. Besides these there are numberless streams of minor importance in a river system such as this, but which

would rank in volume with many of the more celebrated streams of the old world. The Assumption, the Loup rivers, upper and lower, the Chateauguay, the North river, and the Etchemin, are all rivers of importance. Quebec can boast of none of those great inland seas which are the chief features of the western provinces. Some of the lakes are, however, of considerable size. Lake St. John has an area of 360 square miles, and Lake Temiscaming 126 miles; but in the immense number of its lakes and their great natural beauty, Quebec is unsurpassed.

Tourists, who arrive for the most part in the summer months, will probably be surprised to encounter an almost tropical heat in those "*few square miles of snow*" so carelessly ceded to the British crown by a frivolous French monarch. A few words will, therefore, be appropriate concerning the climate. The isothermal line of mean annual temperature at Montreal passes also through Leipzig in Saxony. The mean temperature in summer is the same as that of Orleans in France, and the mean winter temperature resembles that of Moscow in Russia.

The heat is sufficient in summer to bring wheat, Indian corn, tomatoes, and the hardier kinds of grapes, to perfection; and the cold in winter sometimes reaches 20° below zero. Then, however, the soil is covered with a thick mantle of snow; the frost does not penetrate deeply, and the roots of plants are secure from injury until the heats of