

THE SAVAGES

OR VOYAGE OF

SAMUEL DE CHAMPLAIN

OF BROUAGE,

Made in New France in the year 1603.

DESCRIBING,

The customs, mode of life, marriages, wars, and dwellings of the Savages of Canada. Discoveries for more than four hundred and fifty leagues in the country. The tribes, animals, rivers, lakes, islands, lands, trees, and fruits found there. Discoveries on the coast of La Cadie, and numerous mines existing there according to the report of the Savages.

PARIS.

Claude de Monstr'oeil, having his store in the Court of the Palace, under the name of Jesus.

WITH AUTHORITY OF THE KING.

DEDICATION.

To the very noble, high and powerful Lord Charles De Montmorency, Chevalier of the Orders of the King, Lord of Ampuille and of Meru, Count of Secondigny, Viscount of Melun, Baron of Chateauneuf and of Gonnort, Admiral of France and of Brittany.

_My Lord,

Although many have written about the country of Canada, I have nevertheless been unwilling to rest satisfied with their report, and have visited these regions expressly in order to be able to render a faithful testimony to the truth, which you will see, if it be your pleasure, in the brief narrative which I address to you, and which I beg you may find agreeable, and I pray God for your ever increasing greatness and prosperity, my Lord, and shall remain all my life,

Your most humble
and obedient servant,

S. CHAMPLAIN_.

CHAPTER I.

BRIEF NARRATIVE OF THE VOYAGE FROM HONFLEUR IN NORMANDY TO THE PORT OF TADOUSSAC IN CANADA

We set out from Honfleur on the 15th of March, 1603. On the same day we put back to the roadstead of Havre de Gr,ce, the wind not being favorable. On Sunday following, the 16th, we set sail on our route. On the 17th, we sighted d'Orgny and Grenesey, islands between the coast of Normandy and England. On the 18th of the same month, we saw the coast of Brittany. On the 19th, at 7 o'clock in the evening we reckoned that we were off Ouessant. On the 21st, at 7 o'clock in the morning, we met seven Flemish vessels, coming, as we thought from the Indies. On Easter day, the 30th of the same month, we encountered a great tempest, which seemed to be more lightning than wind, and which lasted for seventeen days, though not continuing so severe as it was on the first two days. During this time, we lost more than we gained. On the 16th of April, to the delight of all, the weather began to be more favorable, and the sea calmer than it had been, so that we continued our course until the 18th, when we fell in with a very lofty iceberg. The next day we sighted a bank of ice more than eight leagues long, accompanied by an infinite number of smaller banks, which prevented us from going on. In the opinion of the pilot, these masses of ice were about a hundred or a hundred and twenty leagues from Canada. We were in latitude 45 deg. 40', and continued our course in 44 deg..

On the 2nd of May we reached the Bank at 11 o'clock in the forenoon, in 44 deg. 40'. On the 6th of the same month we had approached so near to land that we heard the sea beating on the shore, which, however, we could not see on account of the dense fog, to which these coasts are subject. For this reason we put out to sea again a few leagues, until the next morning, when the weather being clear, we sighted land, which was Cape St. Mary.

On the 12th we were overtaken by a severe gale, lasting two days. On the 15th we sighted the islands of St. Peter. On the 17th we fell in with an ice-bank near Cape Ray, six leagues in length, which led us to lower sail for the entire night that we might avoid the danger to which we were exposed. On the next day we set sail and sighted Cape Ray, the islands of St. Paul, and Cape St. Lawrence. The latter is on the mainland lying to the south, and the distance from it to Cape Ray is eighteen leagues, that being the breadth of the entrance to the great bay of Canada. On the same day, about ten o'clock in the morning, we fell in with another bank of ice, more than eight leagues in length. On the

20th, we sighted an island some twenty-five or thirty leagues long, called Anticosty, which marks the entrance to the river of Canada. The next day, we sighted Gaspé, a very high land, and began to enter the river of Canada, coasting along the south side as far as Montanne, distant sixty-five leagues from Gaspé. Proceeding on our course, we came in sight of the Bic, twenty leagues from Mantanne and on the southern shore; continuing farther, we crossed the river to Tadoussac, fifteen leagues from the Bic. All this region is very high, barren, and unproductive.

On the 24th of the month, we came to anchor before Tadoussac, and on the 26th entered this port, which has the form of a cove. It is at the mouth of the river Saguenay, where there is a current and tide of remarkable swiftness and a great depth of water, and where there are sometimes troublesome winds, in consequence of the cold they bring. It is stated that it is some forty-five or fifty leagues up to the first fall in this river, and that it flows from the northwest. The harbor of Tadoussac is small, in which only ten or twelve vessels could lie; but there is water enough on the east, sheltered from the river Saguenay, and along a little mountain, which is almost cut off by the river. On the shore there are very high mountains, on which there is little earth, but only rocks and sand, which are covered, with pine, cypress and fir, and a smallish species of trees. There is a small pond near the harbor, enclosed by wood-covered mountains. At the entrance to the harbor, there are two points: the one on the west side extending a league out into the river, and called St. Matthew's Point; the other on the southeast side extending out a quarter of a league, and called All-Devils' Point. This harbor is exposed to the winds from the south, southeast, and south-southwest. The distance from St. Matthew's Point to All-Devils' Point is nearly a league; both points are dry at low tide.

CHAPTER II.

FAVORABLE RECEPTION GIVEN TO THE FRENCH BY THE GRAND SAGAMORE OF THE SAVAGES OF CANADA--THE BANQUETS AND DANCES OF THE LATTER--THEIR WAR WITH THE IROQUOIS.--THE MATERIAL OF WHICH THEIR CANOES AND CABINS ARE MADE, AND THEIR MODE OF CONSTRUCTION--INCLUDING ALSO A DESCRIPTION OF ST MATTHEW'S POINT.

On the 27th, we went to visit the savages at St. Matthew's point, distant a league from Tadoussac, accompanied by the two savages whom Sieur du Pont GravÈ took to make a report of what they had seen in France, and of the friendly reception the king had given them. Having landed, we proceeded to the cabin of their grand Sagamore* named Anadabijou, whom we found with some eighty or a hundred of his companions celebrating a tabagie,

that is a banquet. He received us very cordially, and according to the custom of his country, seating us near himself, with all the savages arranged in rows on both sides of the cabin. One of the savages whom we had taken with us began to make an address, speaking of the cordial reception the king had given them, and the good treatment they had received in France, and saying they were assured that his Majesty was favorably disposed towards them, and was desirous of peopling their country, and of making peace with their enemies, the Iroquois, or of sending forces to conquer them. He also told them of the handsome manors, palaces, and houses they had seen, and of the inhabitants and our mode of living. He was listened to with the greatest possible silence. Now, after he had finished his address, the grand Sagamore, Anadabijou, who had listened to it attentively, proceeded to take some tobacco, and give it to Sieur du Pont GravÈ of St. Malo, myself, and some other Sagamores, who were near him. After a long smoke, he began to make his address to all, speaking with gravity, stopping at times a little, and then resuming and saying, that they truly ought to be very glad in having his Majesty for a great friend. They all answered with one voice, _Ho, ho, ho_, that is to say _yes, yes_. He continuing his address said that he should be very glad to have his Majesty people their land, and make war upon their enemies; that there was no nation upon earth to which they were more kindly disposed than to the French. finally he gave them all to understand the advantage and profit they could receive from his Majesty. After he had finished his address, we went out of his cabin, and they began to celebrate their _tabagie_ or banquet, at which they have elk's meat, which is similar to beef, also that of the bear, seal and beaver, these being their ordinary meats, including also quantities of fowl. They had eight or ten boilers full of meats, in the middle of this cabin, separated some six feet from each other, each one having its own fire. They were seated on both sides, as I stated before, each one having his porringer made of bark. When the meat is cooked, some one distributes to each his portion in his porringer, when they eat in a very filthy manner. For when their hands are covered with fat, they rub them on their heads or on the hair of their dogs of which they have large numbers for hunting. Before their meat was cooked, one of them arose, took a dog and hopped around these boilers from one end of the cabin to the other. Arriving in front of the great Sagamore, he threw his dog violently to the ground, when all with one voice exclaimed, _Ho, ho, ho_, after which he went back to his place. Instantly another arose and did the same, which performance was continued until the meat was cooked. Now after they had finished their _tabagie_, they began to dance, taking the heads of their enemies, which were slung on their backs, as a sign of joy. One or two of them sing, keeping time with their hands, which they strike on their knees: sometimes they stop, exclaiming, _Ho, ho, ho_, when they begin dancing again, puffing like a man out of breath. They were having this celebration in honor of the victory they had obtained over the Iroquois, several hundred of whom they had killed, whose heads they had cut off and had with

them to contribute to the pomp of their festivity. Three nations had engaged in the war, the Etechemins, Algonquins, and Montagnais. These, to the number of a thousand, proceeded to make war upon the Iroquois, whom they encountered at the mouth of the river of the Iroquois, and of whom they killed a hundred. They carry on war only by surprising their enemies; for they would not dare to do so otherwise, and fear too much the Iroquois, who are more numerous than the Montagnais, Etechemins, and Algonquins.

On the 28th of this month they came and erected cabins at the harbor of Tadoussac, where our vessel was. At daybreak their grand Sagamore came out from his cabin and went about all the others, crying out to them in a loud voice to break camp to go to Tadoussac, where their good friends were. Each one immediately took down his cabin in an incredibly short time, and the great captain was the first to take his canoe and carry it to the water, where he embarked his wife and children and a quantity of furs. Thus were launched nearly two hundred canoes, which go wonderfully fast; for, although our shallop was well manned, yet they went faster than ourselves. Two only do the work of propelling the boat, a man and a woman. Their canoes are some eight or nine feet long, and a foot or a foot and a half broad in the middle, growing narrower towards the two ends. They are very liable to turn over, if one does not understand how to manage them, for they are made of the bark of trees called *_bouille_*, strengthened on the inside by little ribs of wood strongly and neatly made. They are so light that a man can easily carry one, and each canoe can carry the weight of a pipe. When they wish to go overland to some river where they have business, they carry their canoes with them.

Their cabins are low and made like tents, being covered with the same kind of bark as that before mentioned. The whole top for the space of about a foot they leave uncovered, whence the light enters; and they make a number of fires directly in the middle of the cabin, in which there are sometimes ten families at once. They sleep on skins, all together, and their dogs with them.

They were in number a thousand persons, men, women and children. The place at St. Matthew's Point, where they were first encamped, is very pleasant. They were at the foot of a small slope covered with trees, firs and cypresses. At St. Matthew's Point there is a small level place, which is seen at a great distance. On the top of this hill there is a level tract of land, a league long, half a league broad, covered with trees. The soil is very sandy, and contains good pasturage. Elsewhere there are only rocky mountains, which are very barren. The tide rises about this slope, but at low water leaves it dry for a full half league out.

ENDNOTES:

* *Sagamo*, thus written in the French According to Laflèche, as cited by Laverdière, this word, in the Montagnais language, is derived from *tchi*, great and *okimau*, chief, and consequently signifies the Great Chief.

CHAPTER III.

THE REJOICINGS OF THE INDIANS AFTER OBTAINING A VICTORY OVER THEIR ENEMIES--THEIR DISPOSITION, ENDURANCE OF HUNGER, AND MALICIOUSNESS.--THEIR BELIEFS AND FALSE OPINIONS, COMMUNICATION WITH EVIL SPIRITS--THEIR GARMENTS, AND HOW THEY WALK ON THE SNOW--THEIR MANNER OF MARRIAGE, AND THE INTERMENT OF THEIR DEAD.

On the 9th of June the savages proceeded to have a rejoicing all together, and to celebrate their *tabagie*, which I have before described, and to dance, in honor of their victory over their enemies. Now, after they had feasted well, the Algonquins, one of the three nations, left their cabins and went by themselves to a public place. Here they arranged all their wives and daughters by the side of each other, and took position themselves behind them, all singing in the manner I have described before. Suddenly all the wives and daughters proceeded to throw off their robes of skins, presenting themselves stark naked, and exposing their sexual parts. But they were adorned with *matachiats*, that is beads and braided strings, made of porcupine quills, which they dye in various colors. After finishing their songs, they all said together, *Ho, ho, ho:* at the same instant all the wives and daughters covered themselves with their robes, which were at their feet. Then, after stopping a short time, all suddenly beginning to sing throw off their robes as before. They do not stir from their position while dancing, and make various gestures and movements of the body, lifting one foot and then the other, at the same time striking upon the ground. Now, during the performance of this dance, the Sagamore of the Algonquins, named *Besouat*, was seated before these wives and daughters, between two sticks, on which were hung the heads of their enemies. Sometimes he arose and went haranguing, and saying to the Montagnais and Etechemins: "Look! how we rejoice in the victory that we have obtained over our enemies; you must do the same, so that we may be satisfied." Then all said together, *Ho, ho, ho.* After returning to his position, the grand Sagamore together with all his companions removed their robes, making themselves stark naked except their sexual parts, which are covered with a small piece of skin. Each one took what seemed good to him, as *matachiats*, hatchets, swords, kettles, fat, elk flesh, seal, in a word each one had a present, which they proceeded to give to the Algonquins. After all these ceremonies, the dance ceased, and the Algonquins, men and women, carried their presents into

their cabins. Then two of the most agile men of each nation were taken, whom they caused to run, and he who was the fastest in the race, received a present.

All these people have a very cheerful disposition, laughing often; yet at the same time they are somewhat phlegmatic. They talk very deliberately, as if desiring to make themselves well understood, and stopping suddenly, they reflect for a long time, when they resume their discourse. This is their usual manner at their harangues in council, where only the leading men, the elders, are present, the women and children not attending at all.

All these people suffer so much sometimes from hunger, on account of the severe cold and snow, when the animals and fowl on which they live go away to warmer countries, that they are almost constrained to eat one another. I am of opinion that if one were to teach them how to live, and instruct them in the cultivation of the soil and in other respects, they would learn very easily, for I can testify that many of them have good judgment and respond very appropriately to whatever question may be put to them. [141] They have the vices of taking revenge and of lying badly, and are people in whom it is not well to put much confidence, except with caution and with force at hand. They promise well, but keep their word badly.

Most of them have no law, so far as I have been able to observe or learn from the great Sagamore, who told me that they really believed there was a God, who created all things. Whereupon I said to him: that, "Since they believed in one sole God, how had he placed them in the world, and whence was their origin." He replied: that, "After God had made all things, he took a large number of arrows, and put them in the ground; whence sprang men and women, who had been multiplying in the world up to the present time, and that this was their origin." I answered that what he said was false, but that there really was one only God, who had created all things upon earth and in the heavens. Seeing all these things so perfect, but that there was no one to govern here on earth, he took clay from the ground, out of which he created Adam our first father. While Adam was sleeping, God took a rib from his side, from which he formed Eve, whom he gave to him as a companion, and, I told him, that it was true that they and ourselves had our origin in this manner, and not from arrows, as they suppose. He said nothing, except that he acknowledged what I said, rather than what he had asserted. I asked him also if he did not believe that there was more than one only God. He told me their belief was that there was a God, a Son, a Mother, and the Sun, making four; that God, however, was above all, that the Son and the Sun were good, since they received good things from them; but the Mother, he said, was worthless, and ate them up; and the Father not very good. I remonstrated with him on his error, and contrasted it with our faith, in which he put some little confidence. I asked him if they had never seen God, nor heard from their ancestors that God had come into the

world. He said that they had never seen him; but that formerly there were five men who went towards the setting sun, who met God, who asked them: "Where are you going?" they answered: "We are going in search of our living." God replied to them: "You will find it here." They went on, without paying attention to what God had said to them, when he took a stone and touched two of them with it, whereupon they were changed to stones; and he said again to the three others: "Where are you going?" They answered as before, and God said to them again: "Go no farther, you will find it here." And seeing that nothing came to them, they went on; when God took two sticks, with which he touched the two first, whereupon they were transformed into sticks, when the fifth one stopped, not wishing to go farther. And God asked him again: "Where are you going?" "I am going in search of my living." "Stay and thou shalt find it." He staid without advancing farther, and God gave him some meat, which he ate. After making good cheer, he returned to the other savages, and related to them all the above.

He told me also that another time there was a man who had a large quantity of tobacco (a plant from which they obtain what they smoke), and that God came to this man, and asked him where his pipe was. The man took his pipe, and gave it to God, who smoked much. After smoking to his satisfaction, God broke the pipe into many pieces, and the man asked: "Why hast thou broken my pipe? thou seest in truth that I have not another." Then God took one that he had, and gave it to him, saying: "Here is one that I will give you, take it to your great Sagamore; let him keep it, and if he keep it well, he will not want for any thing whatever, neither he nor all his companions." The man took the pipe, and gave it to his great Sagamore; and while he kept it, the savages were in want of nothing whatever: but he said that afterwards the grand Sagamore lost this pipe, which was the cause of the severe famines they sometimes have. I asked him if he believed all that; he said yes, and that it was the truth. Now I think that this is the reason why they say that God is not very good. But I replied, "that God was in all respects good, and that it was doubtless the Devil who had manifested himself to those men, and that if they would believe as we did in God they would not want for what they had need of; that the sun which they saw, the moon and the stars, had been created by this great God, who made heaven and earth, but that they have no power except that which God has given them; that we believe in this great God, who by His goodness had sent us His dear Son who, being conceived of the Holy Spirit, was clothed with human flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary, lived thirty years on earth, doing an infinitude of miracles, raising the dead, healing the sick, driving out devils, giving sight to the blind, teaching men the will of God his Father, that they might serve, honor and worship Him, shed his blood, suffered and died for us, and our sins, and ransomed the human race, that, being buried, he rose again, descended into hell, and ascended into heaven, where he is seated on the right hand of God his Father."* I told him that this was

the faith of all Christians who believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that these, nevertheless, are not three Gods, but one the same and only God, and a trinity in which there is no before nor after, no greater nor smaller; that the Virgin Mary, mother of the Son of God, and all the men and women who have lived in this world doing the commandments of God, and enduring martyrdom for his name, and who by the permission of God have done miracles, and are saints in heaven in his paradise, are all of them praying this Great Divine Majesty to pardon us our errors and sins which we commit against His law and commandments. And thus, by the prayers of the saints in heaven and by our own prayers to his Divine Majesty, He gives what we have need of, and the devil has no power over us and can do us no harm. I told them that if they had this belief, they would be like us, and that the devil could no longer do them any harm, and that they would not lack what they had need of.

Then this Sagamore replied to me that he acknowledged what I said. I asked him what ceremonies they were accustomed to in praying to their God. He told me that they were not accustomed to any ceremonies, but that each prayed in his heart as he desired. This is why I believe that they have no law, not knowing what it is to worship and pray to God, and living, the most of them, like brute beasts. But I think that they would speedily become good Christians, if people were to colonize their country, of which most of them were desirous.

There are some savages among them whom they call Pilotoua, who have personal communications with the devil. Such an one tells them what they are to do, not only in regard to war, but other things; and if he should command them to execute any undertaking, as to kill a Frenchman or one of their own nation, they would obey his command at once.

They believe, also, that all dreams which they have are real; and many of them, indeed, say that they have seen in dreams things which come to pass or will come to pass. But, to tell the truth in the matter, these are visions of the devil, who deceives and misleads them. This is all that I have been able to learn from them in regard to their matters of belief, which is of a low, animal nature.

All these people are well proportioned in body, without any deformity, and are also agile. The women are well-shaped, full and plump, and of a swarthy complexion, on account of the large amount of a certain pigment with which they rub themselves, and which gives them an olive color. They are clothed in skins, one part of their body being covered and the other left uncovered. In winter they provide for their whole body, for they are dressed in good furs, as those of the elk, otter, beaver, seal, stag, and hind, which they have in large quantities. In winter, when the snows are heavy, they make a sort of raquette ** two or three times as large as

those in France. These they attach to their feet, and thus walk upon the snow without sinking in; for without them, they could not hunt or make their way in many places.

Their manner of marriage is as follows: When a girl attains the age of fourteen or fifteen years, she may have several suitors and friends, and keep company with such as she pleases. At the end of some five or six years she may choose that one to whom her fancy inclines as her husband, and they will live together until the end of their life, unless, after living together a certain period, they fail to have children, when the husband is at liberty to divorce himself and take another wife, on the ground that his own is of no worth. Accordingly, the girls are more free than the wives; yet as soon as they are married they are chaste, and their husbands are for the most part jealous, and give presents to the father or relatives of the girl whom they marry. This is the manner of marriage, and conduct in the same.

In regard to their interments, when a man or woman dies, they make a trench, in which they put all their property, as kettles, furs, axes, bows and arrows, robes, and other things. Then they put the body in the trench, and cover it with earth, laying on top many large pieces of wood, and erecting over all a piece of wood painted red on the upper part. They believe in the immortality of the soul, and say that when they die themselves, they shall go to rejoice with their relatives and friends in other lands.

ENDNOTES:

* This summary of the Christian faith is nearly in the words of the Apostles Creed.

** *_Une maniÈre de raquette_*. The snow-shoe, which much resembles the racket or battledore, an instrument used for striking the ball in the game of tennis. This name was given for the want of one more specific.