

NEW
VOYAGES
TO
North-America.

CONTAINING

An Account of the several Nations of that vast Continent ; their Customs, Commerce, and Way of Navigation upon the Lakes and Rivers ; the several Attempts of the *English* and *French* to dispossess one another ; with the Reasons of the Miscarriage of the former ; and the various Adventures between the *French*, and the *Iroquesse* Confederates of *England*, from 1683 to 1694.

A Geographical Description of *Canada*, and a Natural History of the Country, with Remarks upon their Government, and the Interest of the *English* and *French* in their Commerce.

Also a Dialogue between the Author and a General of the Savages, giving a full View of the Religion and strange Opinions of those People : With an Account of the Authors Retreat to *Portugal* and *Denmark*, and his Remarks on those Courts.

To which is added,

A Dictionary of the *Algonkine* Language, which is generally spoke in *North-America*.

Illustrated with Twenty Three Mapps, and Cuts.

Written in *French*

By the Baron LAHONTAN, Lord Lieutenant of the *French* Colony at *Placentia* in *Newfoundland*, now in *England*.

Done into *English*.

In Two VOLUMES.

A great part of which never Printed in the Original.

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false; for the poor Man could do no more than he did. Just now, I was inform'd that Mr. *Hainaut*, Mr. *Montortier*, and Mr. *Durivau*, three Captains of Ships, are arriv'd at *Quebec*, with a design to pass the Winter there, and to assist him as Counsellors; and that the last of these three has brought with him an Independent Company, to be commanded by himself.

I shall have no opportunity of writing again before the next Spring; for the last Ships that are to return for *France* this year, are now ready to sail.

I am, SIR, Yours, &c.

LETTER VIII.

Dated at *Montreal*, June 28. 1685.

Representing the Fortifications of Montreal, and the indiscreet Zeal of the Priests, who are Lords of that Town: With a Description of Chamblie, and of the Commerce of the Savages upon the great Lakes.

SIR,

I Have just receiv'd yours, by a small Vessel of *Bordeaux* loaded with Wine; which is the first that came to *Quebec* this Year. I am mightily pleas'd to hear that the King has granted to *M^r. de la Salle* four Ships, to go upon the Discovery of the Mouth of the *Mississipi*; and cannot but admire your Curiosity, in desiring to know the Occurrences of this Place, and how I spent my time in the Winter.

Mr. *de Callieres* was no sooner possess'd of his Government, than he order'd all the Inhabitants of this Town, and of the adjacent Country, to cut down and bring in great Stakes, of fifteen Foot in length,

to

to fortifie the Town. During the Winter, these Orders were pursued with so much Application, that all things are now ready for making the Inclosure; in which five or six hundred Men are to be imploy'd. I spent part of the Winter in Hunting with the *Algonkins*, in order to a more perfect knowledge of their Language; and the rest I spent in this Place, with a great deal of uneasiness: for, here we cannot enjoy our selves, either at Play, or in visiting the Ladies, but 'tis presently carried to the Curate's ears, who takes publick notice of it in the Pulpit. His Zeal goes so far, as even to name the Persons: and since he refuses the Sacrament of the Holy Supper to Ladies of Quality, upon the most slender Pretences, you may easily guess at the other steps of his Indiscretion. You cannot imagine to what a pitch these Ecclesiastical Lords have screw'd their Authority: They excommunicate all the *Masks*, and wherever they spy 'em, they run after 'em to uncover their Faces, and abuse 'em in a reproachful manner: In fine, they have a more watchful eye over the Conduct of the Girls and married Women, than their Fathers and Husbands have. They cry out against those that do not receive the Sacrament once a Month; and at *Easter* they oblige all sorts of Persons to give in Bills to their Confessors. They prohibit and burn all the Books that treat of any other Subject but Devotion. When I think of this Tyranny, I cannot but be intrag'd at the impertinent Zeal of the Curate of this City. This inhumane Fellow came one day to my Lodging, and finding the Romance of the Adventures of *Petronius* upon my Table, he fell upon it with an unimaginable fury, and tore out almost all the Leaves. This Book I valued more than my Life, because 'twas not castrated; and indeed I was so provok'd when I saw it all in wrack, that if my Landlord had not held me, I had gone immediately to that turbulent Pastor's

flor's Hoafe, and would have pluck'd out the Hairs of his Beard with as little mercy as he did the Leaves of my Book. These Animals cannot content themselves with the studying of Mens Actions, but they must likewise dive into their Thoughts. By this Sketch, Sir, you may judge what a pleasant Life we lead here.

The 30th of the last *March* the Ice melted; and the River being then open, I was sent with a small Detachment to *Chambli*: for commonly the Sun resumes its Vigour here much about that time. *Chambli* stands on the brink of a Basin, about five or six Leagues off this Place: That Basin is two Leagues in Circumference, and receives the Lake of *Champlain* by a Water-fall that is a League and a half in length; out of which there arises a River that disembogues at *Sorel* into the River of St. *Lawrence*, as I intimated above in my fourth Letter. In former times this Place had a great Trade in Beaver-skins, which is now decay'd: for the *Socokis*, the *Mahingans*, and the *Openangos*, us'd formerly to resort thither in shoals, to exchange their Furs for other Goods; but at present they are retir'd to the *English* Colonies, to avoid the pursuit of the *Iroquese*. The *Champlain* Lake, which lies above that Water-fall, is eighty Leagues in circumference. At the end of this Lake we met with another, call'd *S. Sacrement*, by which one may go very easily to *New-York*, there being but a Land-carriage of two Leagues from thence to the River *Du Fer*, which falls into the *Manathe*. While I was at *Chambli*, I saw two Canows loaded with Beaver-skins pass privately by that way; and 'twas thought they were sent thither by *Mr. de la Barre*. This smuggling way of Trade is expressly prohibited: for they are oblig'd to carry these Skins before the Office of the Company, where they are rated at an Hundred and 60 per Cent. less than the *English* buy 'em at in their Colonies. But the little Fort that stands at the bottom
of

of the Water-fall, upon the brink of the Basin of *Chambli*, being only single Pallifadoes, it cannot hinder People to pass that way; especially considering that the Prospect, of so great a profit, renders the Passengers the more daring. The Inhabitants of the adjacent Villages are very much expos'd to the Incursions of the *Iroques* in time of War. Notwithstanding the weakness of the Fort, I continued in that place a Month and a half, and then I return'd hither, where *Mr. de la Barre* arriv'd some days after; being accompany'd with *Mr. Hennaut*, *Mr. Montfortier*, and *Mr. du Rivau*. Much about the same day there arriv'd 25 or 30 Canows, belonging to the *Coureurs de Bois*, being homeward bound from the great Lakes, and laden with Beaver-skins. The Cargo of each Canow amounted to 40 Packs, each of which weighs 50 pound, and will fetch 50 Crowns at the Farmers Office. These Canows were follow'd by 50 more of the *Ojibwas* and *Hurons*, who come down every Year to the Colony, in order to make a better Market than they can do in their own Country of *Mississinakinac*, which lies on the Banks of the Lake of *Hurons*, at the Mouth of the Lake of the *Illinise*. Their way of Trading is as follows.

Upon their first Arrival, they incamp at the distance of five or six hundred Paces from the Town. The next day is spent in ranging their Canows, unloading their Goods, and pitching their Tents, which are made of Birch Bark. The next day after, they demand Audience of the Governour General; which is granted 'em that same day in a publick place. Upon this Occasion, each Nation makes a Ring for it self; the *Savages* sit upon the Ground with their Pipes in their Mouths, and the Governour is seated in an arm'd Chair; after which, there starts up an Orator or Speaker from one of these Nations, who makes an Harangue, importing, 'That his Brethren are
' come to visit the Governour general, and to renew
' with

' with him their wonted Friendship: That their chief
 ' View is, to promote the Interest of the *French*, some
 ' of whom being unacquainted with the way of
 ' Traffick, and being too weak for the transporting
 ' of Goods from the Lakes, would be unable to deal
 ' in Beaver-skins, if his Brethren did not come in
 ' person to deal with 'em in their own Colonies:
 ' That they know very well how acceptable their
 ' Arrival is to the Inhabitants of *Monreal*, in regard of
 ' the Advantage they reap by it: That in regard the
 ' Beaver-skins are much valued in *France*, and the
 ' *French* Goods given in exchange are of an inconfi-
 ' derable Value, they mean to give the *French* suffici-
 ' ent proof of their readiness to furnish 'em with
 ' what they desire so earnestly: That by way of pre-
 ' paration for another Years Cargo, they are come
 ' to take in Exchange, Fuses, Powder, and Ball,
 ' in order to hunt great numbers of Beavers, or to
 ' gall the *Indians*, in case they offer to disturb the
 ' *French* Settlements: And, in fine, That is confir-
 ' mation of their Words, they throw a Porcelain
 ' *Calier* with some Beaver-skins to the *Kitchi-Okima*
 ' (so they call the Governour-General) whose Pro-
 ' tection they lay claim to in case of any Robbery or
 ' Abuse committed upon 'em in the Town.

The Spokesman having made an end of his
 Speech, returns to his Place, and takes up his Pipe;
 and then the Interpreter explains the Substance of
 the Harangue to the Governour, who commonly
 gives a very civil Answer, especially if the Present
 be valuable: in consideration of which, he likewise
 makes them a Present of some trifling things. This
 done, the Savages rise up, and return to their Huts
 to make suitable Preparations for the ensuing Truck.

The next day the Savages make their Slaves carry
 the Skins to the Houses of the Merchants, who bar-
 gain with 'em for such Cloaths as they want. All the
 Inhabitants of *Monreal* are allow'd to traffick with

'em in any Commodity but Wine and Brandy; these two being excepted upon the account that when the Savages have got what they wanted, and have any Skins left, they drink to excess, and then kill their Slaves; for when they are in drink, they quarrel and fight; and if they were not held by those who are sober, wou'd certainly make Havock one of another. However, you must observe, that none of 'em will touch either Gold or Silver. 'Tis a comical sight, to see 'em running from Shop to Shop, stark naked, with their Bow and Arrow. The nicer sort of Women are wont to hold their Fans before their eyes, to prevent their being frighted with the view of their ugly Parts. But these merry Companions, who know the brisk She-Merchants as well as we, are not wanting in making an Offer, which is sometimes accepted of, when the Present is of good Mettle. If we may credit the common Report, there are more than one or two of the Ladies of this Country, whose Constancy and Vertue has held out against the Attacks of several Officers, and at the same time vouchsaf'd a free access to these nasty Lechers. 'Tis presum'd their Compliance was the Effect of Curiosity, rather than of any nice Relish; for, in a word, the Savages are neither brisk, nor constant. But whatever is in the matter, the Women are the more excusable upon this Head, that such Opportunities are very unfrequent.

As soon as the Savages have made an end of their Truck, they take leave of the Governour, and so return home by the River of *Ottawa*. To conclude, they did a great deal of good both to the Poor and Rich; for you will readily apprehend, that every body turns Merchant upon such occasions.

I am, SIR, Yours, &c.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

Dated at Boucherville, Octob. 2. 1685.

Being an Account of the Commerce and Trade of Montreal: Of the Arrival of the Marquis of Denonville with some Troops; and of the recalling of Mr. de la Barre. With a curious Description of certain Licenses for Trading in Beaver-skins in the remote Countries.

SIR,

I Receiv'd your second Letter three Weeks ago, but could not send a speedier Answer, by reason that none of our Ships have yet set Sail for France. Since you want to know the nature of the Trade of *Montreal*, be pleas'd to take the following Account.

Almost all the Merchants of that City act only on the behalf of the *Quebec* Merchants, whose Factors they are. The Barques which carry thither dry Commodities, as well as Wine and Brandy, are but few in number; but then they make several Voyages in one Year from the one City to the other. The Inhabitants of the Island of *Montreal*, and the adjacent Cantons, repair twice a Year to the City of *Montreal*, where they buy Commodities fifty per Cent. dearer than at *Quebec*. The Savages of the neighbouring Countries, whether settled or erratick, carry thither the Skins of Beavers, Elks, Caribous, Foxes, and wild Cats; all which, they truck for Fuses, Powder, Lead, and other Necessaries. There every one is allow'd to trade; and indeed 'tis the best place for the getting of an Estate in a short time. All the Merchants have such a perfect good understanding one with another, that they all sell at the same price.

But when the Inhabitants of the Country find their Prices exorbitant, they raise their Commodities in proportion. The Gentlemen that have a Charge of Children, especially Daughters, are oblig'd to be good Husbands, in order to bear the Expence of the magnificent Cloaths with which they are set off; for Pride, Vanity, and Luxury, reign as much in *New France* as in *Old France*. In my opinion, 'twould do well, if the King would order Commodities to be rated at a reasonable Price, and prohibit the selling of Gold or Silver Brocades, Fringes, and Ribbands, as well as Points and rich Laces.

The Marquis of *Denonville* is come to succeed Mr. *de la Barre* in the quality of Governour-General; for the King has recall'd Mr. *de la Barre*, upon the Accusations laid against him by his Enemies. To be sure, you who are in *France* know better than I, that Mr. *de Denonville* was *Maitre de Camp* to the Queen's Regiment of Dragoons, which Place he sold to Mr. *Murcey* when the King bestow'd this Government upon him; and, that he brought with him some Companies of Marines, besides his Lady and his Children: for it seems the danger and inconveniencies that attend such a long and troublesome Voyage, made no Impression upon her. This Governour stay'd at first some Weeks at *Quebec*, after which he came to *Monreal*, with 500 or 600 Men of Regular Troops, and sent back the Captains *Hainaut*, *Montortier*, and *du Rivo*, with several other Officers. His Army is now in Winter Quarters all round *Monreal*. My Quarters are at a Place call'd *Boucherville*, which lies at the distance of three Leagues from *Monreal*. I have been here fifteen Days, and in all appearance shall live more happily than in the Town, abating for the Solitude; for at least I shall have no other opposition to encounter in the case of Balls, Gaming, or Feasting, but the zealous Freaks of a silly Priest. I am inform'd, that the Governour
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has given Orders to compleat the Fortifications of *Monreal*, and is now ready to embarque for *Quebec*, where our Governours commonly pass the Winter. The Savages I spoke of in my last, met the *Iroquesse* upon the great River of the *Ottawas*, who inform'd 'em that the *English* were making Preparations to transport to their Villages in *Mississimakinac*, better and cheaper Commodities than those they had from the *French*. This piece of News did equally alarm the Gentlemen, the Pedlars call'd *Coueurs de Bois*, and the Merchants; who, at that rate, would be considerable Losers: for you must know, that *Canada* subsists only upon the Trade of Skins or Furs, three fourths of which come from the People that live round the great Lakes: So that if the *English* should put such a Design in execution, the whole Conuntry would suffer by it; especially considering, that 'twould sink certain Licenses: an Account of which will be proper in this place.

These Licenses are granted in Writing by the Governours General, to poor Gentlemen and old Officers who have a Charge of Children. They are dispos'd of by the King's Orders; and the Design of 'em is, to enable such Persons to send Commodities to these Lakes. The Number of the Persons thus empower'd, ought not to exceed twenty five in one Year: but God knows how many more have private Licenses. All other Persons, of what Quality or Condition soever, are prohibited to go or send to these Lakes, without such Licenses, under the pain of Death. Each License extends to the lading of two great Canows; and whoever procures a whole or a half License for himself, may either make use of it himself, or sell it to the highest Bidder. Commonly they are bought at six hundred Crowns a-piece. Those who purchase 'em are at no trouble in finding Pedlars or Forest-Rangers to undertake the long Voyages, which fetch the most considerable

Gains, and commonly extend to a Year, and sometimes more. The Merchants put into the two Canows stipulated in the License, six Men with a thousand Crowns-worth of Goods, which are rated to the Pedlars at fifteen *per Cent.* more than what they are sold for in ready Money in the Colony. When the Voyage is perform'd, this Sum of a thousand Crowns commonly brings in seven hundred *per Cent.* clear profit, and sometimes more, sometimes less; for these Sparks call'd *Coueurs de Bois* bite the Savages most dexterously, and the lading of two Canows, computed at a thousand Crowns, is a Purchase for as many Beaver-skins as will load four Canows: Now, four Canows will carry a hundred and sixty Packs of Skins, that is, forty a-piece; and reckoning each Pack to be worth fifty Crowns, the value of the whole amounts to eight thousand Crowns. As to the Repartition of this extravagant Profit, 'tis made after the following manner: In the first place, the Merchant takes out of the whole bulk six hundred Crowns for the Purchase of his License; then a thousand Crowns for the prime Cost of the exported Commodities. After this, there remains 6400 Crowns of Surplusage, out of which the Merchant takes forty *per Cent.* for Bottomree, which amounts to 2560 Crowns; and the Remainder is divided equally among the six *Coueurs de Bois*, who get little more than 600 Crowns a-piece: and indeed I must say 'tis fairly earn'd; for their Fatigue is inconceivable. In the mean time, you must remark, that over and above the foregoing profit, the Merchant gets 25 *per Cent.* upon his Beaver-skins by carrying them to the Office of the Farmers General, where the Price of four sorts of Beaver-skins is fix'd. If the Merchant sells these Skins to any private Man in the Country for ready Money, he is paid in the current Money of the Country, which is of less value than the Bills of Exchange that the Director of

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that Office draws upon *Rochel* or *Paris*; for there they are paid in *French Livres*, which are twenty *Sols*, whereas a *Canada Livre* is but fifteen *Sols*. This Advantage of 25 per Cent. is call'd *le Benefice*; but take notice, that 'tis only to be had upon *Beaver-skins*: for, if you pay to a *Quebec Merchant* 400 *Canada Livres* in Silver, and take from him a Bill of Exchange upon his Correspondent in *France*, his Correspondent will pay no more than 300 *French Livres*, which is a just Equivalent.

This is the last Intelligence I shall give you for this Year, which has already brought in a very cold *Autumn*. The *Quebec Ships* must set Sail in the middle of *November*, pursuant to the wonted Custom. I am,

S. I R,

Yours, &c.

LETTER X.

Dated at *Boucherville* July 8. 1686.

Relating the Arrival of Mr. de Champigni, in the room of Mr. de Meules, who is recall'd to France; the arrival of the Troops that came along with him, the curiosity of the Rackets, and the way of hunting Elks; with a Description of that Animal.

S I R,

THOUGH I have not heard from you this year, yet I will not slight this opportunity of writing to you. Some Ships from *France* are arriv'd at *Quebec*, and have brought over Mr. de Champigni No-

vous, with some Companies of Marines. He comes to supply the place of Mr. *de Menles*, whom the King recalls upon the unjust complaints that are made of him. He is charg'd with preferring his private Interest to the publick Good; but the charge is false, and he will easily clear himself. I am apt to believe he may have carry'd on some under-hand Commerce, but in so doing he injur'd no body; nay, on the contrary he has procur'd Bread for a thousand poor Creatures, that without his Assistance would have starv'd for Hunger. This new Intendant is descended of one of the most Illustrious Families of the Robe in France. He is said to be a Man of Honour, and Fame entitles his Lady to a distinguishing Merit: I understand, he and Mr. *Denonville* are bound speedily for *Monreal*, where they mean to take a review of the Inhabitants of this Island, and of the Neighbouring Cantons. Probably, they take such precautions in order to some new effort against the *Iroquese*. Last Winter we had no new Occurrences in the Colony. I spent the whole Winter at the hunting of Originals or Elks along with the Savages, whose Language I am learning, as I have intimated to you several times.

The hunting of Elks is perform'd upon the Snow, with such Rackets as you see design'd in the annex'd Cut. These Rackets are two Foot and a half long, and fourteen Inches broad; their ledges are made of a very hard Wood, about an Inch thick, that fastens the Net just like a Tennis Racket, from which they differ only in this; that those for the Tennis are made of Gut-strings, whereas the others are made of little thongs of the skins of Harts or Elks. In the Cut, you may perceive two little spars of Wood, which run a-cross to render the Net firmer and stiffer. The hole that appears by the two Latchers, is the place in which they put the Toes and fore-part of the Foot; so that 'tis tied fast by
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the two Latches, which run twice round about the Heel, and every step they make upon the Snow, the fore-part of the Foot sinks into that hole, as often as they raise their Heel. By the help of this Contrivance they walk faster upon the Snow, than one can do with Shoes upon a beaten path: And indeed 'tis so necessary for them, that 'twould be otherwise impossible not only to hunt and range the Woods, but even to go to Church, notwithstanding they are so near; for commonly the Snow is three or four Foot deep in that Country during the Winter. Being oblig'd to march thirty or forty Leagues in the Woods in pursuit of the above-mention'd Animals, I found that the fatigue of the Journey equal'd the pleasure of it.

The *Original* is a sort of Elk, not much different from that we find in *Muscovy*. 'Tis as big as an *Auvergne* Moyle, and much of the same shape, abating for its Muzzle, its Tail, and its great flat Horns, which weigh sometimes 300, and sometimes 400 weight, if we may credit those who pretend to have weigh'd 'em. This Animal usually resorts to planted Countries. Its Hair is long and brown; and the Skin is strong and hard, but not thick. The Flesh of the *Original*, especially that of the Female sort, eats deliciously; and 'tis said, that the far hind Foot of the Female kind, is a Cure for the Falling-Sickness; it neither runs nor skips, but its trot will almost keep up with the running of a Hart. The Savages assure us, that in Summer 'twill trot three Days and three Nights without intermission. This sort of Animals commonly gather into a body towards the latter end of Autumn; and the Herds are largest in the beginning of the Spring, at which time the she ones are in rutting; but after their heat is over, they all disperse themselves. We hunted 'em in the following manner: First of all, we went 40 Leagues to the Northward of the River of St. Lau-

rence, where we found a little Lake of three or four Leagues in Circumference, and upon the banks of that Lake, we made Huts for our selves of the barks of Trees, having first clear'd the Ground of the Snow that cover'd it. In our Journey thither, we kill'd as many Hares and Wood-hens, as we could eat. When we had fitted up our Huts, the Savages went out upon the discovery of the Elks, some to the Northward, and some to the South, to the distance of two or three Leagues from the Huts. As soon as they discover'd any fresh foot-steps, they detach'd one of their number to give us notice, to the end, that the whole Company might have the pleasure of seeing the chase. We trac'd these foot-steps sometimes for one, and sometimes for two Leagues, and then fell in with five, ten, fifteen or twenty Elks in a body; which presently betook themselves to flight, whether a part or in a Body, and sunk into the Snow up to their Breast. Where the Snow was hard and condensated, or where the frost following wet Weather had glaz'd it above, we came up with 'em after the chase of a quarter of a League: But when the Snow was soft or just fallen, we were forc'd to pursue 'em three or four Leagues before we could catch 'em, unless the Dogs happen'd to stop 'em where the Snow was very deep. When we came up with them, the Savages fired upon 'em with Fuses. If the Elks be much intrag'd they'll sometimes turn upon the Savages, who cover themselves with Boughs in order to keep off their Feet, with which they would crush 'em to pieces. As soon as they are kill'd, the Savages make new Huts upon the spot, with great Fires in the middle; while the Slaves are employ'd in flensing 'em; and stretching out the Skins in the open Air. One of the Soldiers that accompany'd me, told me one Day, that to withstand the violence of the Cold, one ought to have his Blood compos'd of Brandy,
his

his Body of Brass, and his Eyes of Glass: And I must say, he had some ground for what he spoke, for we were forc'd to keep a Fire all round us, all the Night long. As long as the Flesh of these Animals lasts, the Savages seldom think of stirring; but when 'tis all consum'd, they then look out for a new Discovery. Thus they continue to hunt, till the Snow and the Ice are melted. As soon as the great thaw commences, 'tis impossible for 'em to travel far; so that they content themselves with the killing of Hares and Partridges, which are very numerous in the Woods. When the Rivers are clear of the Ice, they make Canows of the Elk-skins, which they sew together very easily, covering the Seams with a fat sort of Earth instead of pitch. This work is over in four or five days time, after which they return home in the Canows with all their Baggage.

This, Sir, was our Diversion for three Months in the Woods. We took fifty six Elks, and might have kill'd twice as many, if we had hunted for the benefit of the Skins. In the Summer season, the Savages have two ways of killing 'em, both of which are equally troublesome. One consists in hanging a Rope-gin between two Trees, upon a Pass surrounded with Thorns; the other is compass'd by crawling like Snakes among the Trees and Thickers, and approaching to 'em upon the Leeward side, so that they may be shot with a Fusce. Harts and Caribous are kill'd both in Summer and Winter, after the same manner with the Elks; excepting that the Caribou's, which are a kind of wild Asses, make an easy escape when the Snow is hard, by virtue of their broad Feet; whereas the Elk sinks as fast as he rises. In fine, I am so well pleas'd with the hunting of this Country, that I have resolv'd to employ all my leisure time upon that Exercise. The Savages have promised, that in three Months time

I shall see other sorts of chases, which will prove less fatiguing, and more agreeable. I am,

S I R,

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R XI.

Dated at *Boucherville* May 28. 1687.

Being a curious Description of the Hunting of divers Animals.

S I R,

YOU complain that the last year you receiv'd but one of my Letters, dated *July 8.* and with the same breath assure me, that you writ two to me, neither of which is come to hand. I receiv'd a Letter from you this Day, which is so much the more acceptable, that I thought you had been dead, and that I find you continue to give proof of your remembrance of me. I find by your Letter, that you have an agreeable relish for the curious Elk-Hunting in this Country, and that a further account of our other hunting Adventures, would meet with a welcome Reception. This Curiosity, indeed, is worthy of so great a Hunts-Man as your self; but at present I must beg your excuse as to the Beaver-kunting, for I know nothing of it yet but by hear-say.

In the beginning of *September*, I set out in a Canow upon several Rivers, Marshes, and Pools, that disembogue in the *Champlain Lake*, being accompany'd with thirty or forty of the Savages that are very expert in Shooting and Hunting, and perfectly

well

well acquainted with the proper places for finding Water-fowl, Deer, and other fallow Beasts. The first Post we took up was upon the side of a Marsh or Fen of four or five Leagues in Circumference; and after we had fitted up our Huts, the Savages made Huts upon the Water in several places. These Water-Huts are made of the branches and leaves of Trees, and contain three or four Men: For a Decoy they have the skins of Geese, Bustards, and Ducks, dry'd and stuff'd with Hay, the two feet being made fast with two Nails to a small piece of a light plank, which floats round the Hut. This place being frequented by wonderful numbers of Geese, Ducks, Bustards, Teals, and an infinity of other Fowl unknown to the *Europeans*; when these Fowls see the stuff'd Skins swimming with the Heads erected, as if they were alive, they repair to the same place, and so give the Savages an opportunity of shooting 'em, either flying, or upon the Water; after which the Savages get into their Canows and gather 'em up. They have likewise a way of catching 'em with Nets, stretch'd upon the surface of the Water at the Entries of the Rivers. In a word, we eat nothing but Water-fowl for fifteen Days; after which we resolv'd to declare War against the Turtle-Doves, which are so numerous in *Canada*, that the Bishop has been forc'd to excommunicate 'em oftner than once, upon the account of the Damage they do to the Product of the Earth. With that view, we imbarqued and made towards a Meadow, in the Neighbourhood of which, the Trees were cover'd with that sort of Fowl, more than with Leaves: For just then 'twas the season in which they retire from the North Countries, and repair to the Southern Climates; and one would have thought, that all the Turtle-Doves upon Earth had chose to pass thro' this place. For the eighteen or twenty days that we stay'd there, I firmly believe that a thousand
Men

Men might have fed upon 'em heartily, without putting themselves to any trouble. You must know, that through the middle of this Meadow there runs a Brook, upon which I and two young Savages shot several Snipes, Rayles, and a certain sort of Fowl call'd *Bateurs de faux*, which is as big as a Quail, and eats very deliciously.

In the same place we kill'd some *Musk-Rats*, or a sort of Animals which resemble a Rat in their shape, and are as big as a Rabbet. The Skins of these Rats are very much valued, as differing but little from those of Beavers. Their Testicles smell so strong of Musk, that no Civet or Antelope that *Asia* affords, can boast of such a strong and sweet smell. We spy'd 'em in the Mornings and Evenings, at which time they usually appear upon the Water with their Nose to the Windward, and betray themselves to the Huntsmen, by the curling of the Water. The *Fouteraux*, which are an amphibious sort of little Pole-Cats, are catch'd after the same manner. I was likewise entertain'd upon this occasion, with the killing of certain little Beasts, call'd *Siffleurs*, or Whistlers, with allusion to their wonted way of whistling or whizzing at the Mouth of their Holes in fair Weather. They are as big as Hares, but somewhat shorter, their Flesh is good for nothing, but their Skins are recommended by their rarity. The Savages gave me an opportunity of hearing one of these Creatures whistle for an hour together, after which they shot it. To gratifie the curiosity I had to see such diversity of Animals, they made a diligent search for the Holes or Dens of the *Carcaïeux*, and having found some at the distance of two or three Leagues from the Pen upon which we were posted, they conducted me to the place. At the break of day we planted our selves round the Holes, with our Bellies upon the Ground; and left some Slaves to hold the Dogs a Musket-shot behind

us. As soon as these Animals perceiv'd Day-light, they came out of their Holes, which were immediately stop'd up by the Savages, and upon that the Dogs fetch'd 'em up with ease. We saw but two of 'em, which made a vigorous defence against the Dogs, but were strangled after a dispute of half an hour. These Animals are not unlike a Badger, only they are bigger, and more mischievous. Tho' our Dogs shew'd a great deal of Courage in attacking the *Carcass*, they betray'd their Cowardice the next day in a rencounter with a Porcupine, which we spy'd upon a little Tree. To obtain the pleasure of seeing the Porcupine fall, we cut down the Tree; but neither the Dogs nor we durst go near it: The Dogs only bark'd and jump'd round it; for it darted its long and hard hair like so many Bodkins, three or four paces off. At last we pelted it to death, and put it upon the fire to burn off its Darts; after which we scalded it like a Pig, took out the Intrails, and roasted it: But tho' 'twas very fat, I could not relish it so well as to comply with the assertion of the Natives, who alledge, that it eats as well as a Capon or a Partridge.

After the Turtle-Doves had all pass'd over the place, in quest of their Southern retreats, the Savages offer'd to send some of their number with Canows to conduct me home, before the Rivers and Lakes were frozen over; for themselves were to tarry out for the Elk-hunting; and they imagin'd that the Cold and Hardship attending that Exercise, had made me sick of it the year before. However, we had then a Month good before the commencement of the Frost, and in that interval of time, they proffer'd to entertain me with more diverting Game than any I had seen before. They propos'd to go fifteen or sixteen Leagues further up the Country, assuring me, that they knew of a certain place that had the most advantageous situati-
on

on in the World, both for Pleasure and Profit, and that afforded great plenty of Otters, of the Skins of which they mean'd to make a great Cargoe. Accordingly we pull'd down our Hurts, and having imbarqu'd in our Canows, sail'd up the River, till we came to a little Lake of two Leagues in Circumference, at the end of which we saw another greater Lake, divided from this by an Isthmus of 150 Paces in length. We pitch'd our Hurts at the distance of a League from that Isthmus; and some of the Savages fish'd for Trouts, while the rest were employ'd in laying Traps for the Otters upon the brinks of the Lake. These Traps are made of five Stakes plac'd in the form of an oblong Quadrangle, so as to make a little Chamber, the Door of which is kept up, and supported by a Stake. To the middle of this Stake they tye a string which passes thro' a little fork, and has a Trout well fasten'd to the end of it. Now, when the Otter comes on shore, and sees this bait, he puts above half his Body into that fatal Cage, in order to swallow the Fish; but he no sooner touches, than the string to which 'tis made fast pulls away the Stake that supports the Door, upon which an heavy and loaded Door falls upon his Reins and quashes him. During our Pilgrimage in that part of the Country, the Savages took above two hundred and fifty *Canada* Otters; the Skins of which are infinitely prittier than those of *Muscovy* or *Sweden*. The best of 'em which are not worth two Crowns in this place, are sold in *France* for four or five, and sometimes for ten, if they are black and very rough. As soon as the Savages had set their Traps, they gave orders to their Slaves to go round the Lake every Morning, in order to take out the amphibious Animals. After that they conducted me to the above-mention'd Isthmus, where I was surpriz'd to see a sort of a Park or Fence made of Trees, sell'd one upon another, and

and interlac'd with Thorns and Branches; with a quadrangular inclosure of Stakes at the end of it, the entry of which was very narrow. They gave me to know, that they used to hunt Harts in that place, and promis'd to divert me with the shew, as soon as the Inclosures were a little mended. In effect, they carry'd me two or three Leagues off, upon such Roads as had nothing on either side but Pens and Marthes; and after they had dispers'd themselves, some on one hand and some on the other, with a Dog for every Man; I saw a great many Harts running to and again, in quest of places of Safety. The Savage that I kept company with, assur'd me, that he and I had no occasion to walk very fast, because he had took the straightest and the nearest Road. Before us we saw above ten Harts, which were forc'd to turn back, rather than throw themselves into the Marsh, of which they could never get clear. At last, after walking a great pace, and running now and then, we arriv'd at the Park, and found the Savages lying flat upon the Ground all round it, in order to shut up the the entry of the Stake Inclosure as soon as the Harts enter'd. We found thirty five Harts in the place, and, if the Park had been better fenc'd, we might have had above sixty; for the nimblest and lightest of 'em, skip'd over before they came to enter the Inclosure. We kill'd a great many of 'em, but spar'd the Dams, because they were great with young. I ask'd of the Savages the Tongues and the Marrow of the Harts, which they gave me very readily. The Flesh was very fat, but not delicious, excepting some few bits about the Ribs. But after all, this was not our only Game; for two days after we went a Bear-hunting, and the Savages who spend three parts of four of their life in Hunting in the Woods, are very dexterous at that Exercise, especially in singling out the Trunks of the Trees upon

which the Bears Nestle. I could not but admire their knowledge in that Point, when, as we were walking up and down in a Forest, at the distance of an hundred Paces one from another, I heard one Savage call to another, *Here's a Bear*. I askt 'em how he knew that there was a Bear upon the Tree which he knock'd with his Axe; and they all reply'd, that 'twas as easily distinguish'd as the print of an Elks foot in the Snow. For five or six times they never miss'd; for after they had knock'd two or three times upon the Trunk of the Tree, the Bear came out of its hole, and was presently shot. The *Canada* Bears are extream black, but not mischievous, for they never attack one, unless they be wounded or fir'd upon. They are so fat, especially in the Autumn, that they can scarce walk: Those which we kill'd were extream fat, but their fat is good for nothing but to be burnt, whereas their Flesh, and, above all, their Feet are very nice Victuals. The Savages affirm, that no Flesh is so delicious as that of Bears; and indeed, I think they are in the right of it. While we rang'd up and down in quest of Bears, we had the pleasure of spying some Martins and wild Cats upon the branches of the Trees, which the Savages shot in the Head to preserve their Skin. But the most Comical thing I saw, was the Stupidity of the Wood-hens, which sit upon the Trees in whole Flocks, and are kill'd one after another, without ever offering to stir. Commonly the Savages shoot at 'em with Arrows, for they say they are not worth a shoot of Powder, which is able to kill an Elk or an Hare. I have ply'd this sort of Fowling in the Neighbourhood of our Cantons or Habitations in the Winter time, with the help of a Dog who found out the Trees by scent, and then bark'd; upon which I approach'd to the Tree, and found the Fowls upon the Branches. When the thaw came, I went two or three Leagues further

ther up the Lake, in Company with some *Canadese*, on purpose to see that Fowl flap with its Wings. Believe me, Sir, this sight is one of the greatest Curiosities in the World; for their flapping makes a noise much like that of a Drum all about, for the space of a Minute or thereabouts; then the noise ceases for half a quarter of an Hour, after which it begins again. By this noise we were directed to the place where the unfortunate Moor-hens sat, and found 'em upon rotten mossy Trees. By flapping one Wing against the other, they mean to call their Mates; and the humming noise that insues thereupon, may be heard half a quarter of a League off. This they do only in the Months of *April, May, September, and October*; and, which is very remarkable, a Moorhen never flaps in this manner, but upon one Tree. It begins at the break of day, and gives over at nine a Clock in the Morning; till about an hour before Sunset that it flutters again, and continues so to do till Night: I protest to you, that I have frequently contented my self with seeing and admiring the flapping of their Wings without offering to shoot at 'em.

Besides the pleasure of so many different sorts of Diversion, I was likewise entertain'd in the Woods with the company of the honest old Gentlemen that liv'd in former Ages. Honest *Homer*, the amiable *Anacreon*, and my dear *Lucian*, were my inseparable Companions. *Aristotle* too desir'd passionately to go along with us, but my Canow was too little to hold his bulky Equipage of Peripatetick Silogisms: So that he was e'en fain to trudge back to the Jesuits, who vouchsaf'd him a very honourable Reception. I had a great deal of reason to rid my self of that great Philosopher's Company; for his ridiculous Jargon, and his senseless Terms, would have frighted the Savages out of their wits. Farewell, Sir; I am now arriv'd at once at the end of

my Game and my Letter. I have heard no News from *Quebec*, where they continue to make mighty Preparations for some considerable Enterprize. Time will discover a great many things, an Account of which I mean to transmit to you by the Ships that are to leave this Harbour in the end of *Autumn*. I conclude with my usual Compliment,

Yours, &c.

LETTER XII.

Dated at *St. Helens*, over-against *Montreal*,
June 8. 1687.

The Chevalier de Vaudreuil arrives in Canada with some Troops. Both the Regular Troops and the Militia, are posted at St. Helens, in a readiness to march against the Iroquele.

SIR,

I Have such a budget-full of News, that I know not where to begin. I receiv'd Letters but now from Mr. *Senclay's* Office; by which I have Advice, that Orders are sent to Mr. *Denonville* to allow me to go for *France*, upon my private Concerns. No longer since than Yesterday, he told me I should have Leave to go after the Campaign is over. My Relations write, that the procuring of this Leave cost 'em a great deal of pains; and that the sooner I come to *Paris*, 'twill be the better for me.

The Governour arriv'd at *Montreal* three or four days ago, with all the Militia of the Country, who lie now incamp'd along with our Troops in that Island. Mr. *D'Amblemont* has been at *Quebec* this Month, with five or six second Rate Ships, having
sail'd