

The first advantage that the wise Reader will derive from this, is that from the experiences, actions, journeys, and accidents which we shall relate to him, one after the other, he will understand much better what these countries are, their nature, the means of helping them, and the vicissitudes of such expeditions and enterprises.

The second is that he will encounter so many and so different events, so many fortunes and incidents with their opportunities and details, that his discretion will be thus greatly strengthened. [120] For in truth, it is a very different thing for a man to philosophize in thesis, and to practice by hypothesis: to mould his ideas in his chamber, and to give form to his deeds among men: to count upon the liberty of the race, and then to find himself enslaved by place, time, people, and a thousand incidents which are trifling, but which very effectually bind him; of no value, yet they often change his purpose and his destiny. Now it is through experience with these particular circumstances and practices, that prudence is acquired; not in a comprehensive and general survey and examination.

The third fruit will be in the recognition of a truly paternal, gentle, and admirable providence of God over those who invoke it, and trust themselves to him among the dangers and changes of this [121] life, such as will be often seen here. These three benefits, it seems to me, will certainly offset the tediousness of the time which will be employed in this reading.

But to the end that all may be better understood, it is well for us to return to those whom we have left for so long a time, namely, to the French, who returned to their own country from Canada, in 1607.