

indiscriminately called, in order to learn their languages and to become initiated into their customs. Some of these interpreters were highly gifted persons and much better instructed than the generality of colonists; it was from their ranks that Champlain was accustomed to choose his agents to explore unknown regions and to conclude treaties with the savage nations.

Among these *voyageurs* and interpreters there is one, Jean Nicolet, who occupies a prominent place in the very earliest history of Canada, and of whom the inhabitants of Cherbouurg have the right to be proud inasmuch as the strongest presumptions — as I shall forthwith show — permit them to claim him as a child of their city, or at least of its vicinity; and still I am much afraid that he is to-day unknown by the majority of them. Are there many among them who have read the extract from the *Relation de la Nouvelle France de 1643* <sup>1</sup> given by M. Pierre Margry in the first volume of his careful studies upon the *Discoveries and Settlements of the French in the West and South of North America*,<sup>2</sup> where the salient facts of his life and tragic end are related? If Nicolet is forgotten among us, he is not so in Canada, where his name is constantly recalled to the present generation by the seignory and county of Nicolet, Nicolet lake, Nicolet river, and the pretty city of Nicolet, in high tide of prosperity, which numbered 7,364 inhabitants on January first of this year, and in which is located Nicolet seminary, one of the first colleges of the new world. Quite recently a decree of the pope divided the diocese of Three Rivers and one of the sections became the new diocese of Nicolet, the titular taking possession of it in July last.<sup>3</sup> “If Canada had entered the era of statues, it would be high time that Jean Nicolet had his bronze in the city of Nicolet,” wrote a Canadian publicist to me, M. Benjamin

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<sup>1</sup> During a period of forty years, beginning with 1632, the Jesuits in Canada kept their superiors in France regularly informed of all that concerned the country; taken together, their reports constitute the *Relations*.— H. J.

<sup>2</sup> 1879. Paris, Maisonneuve.— H. J.

<sup>3</sup> July, 1885.— Ed.