

PAPER II.—EARLY FRENCH SETTLEMENTS IN AMERICA.

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(Read before the Society, March 4th, 1874.)

IN taking a brief retrospect of the early discoveries in America, we may pass over those of Biarne and other followers of Eric the Red, from Iceland; for though they undoubtedly made several visits to it as early as the latter end of the 10th century, and even made some attempts at settlement, these had no influence upon the subsequent history of the continent. There are also some rather apocryphal accounts of voyages from Ireland and elsewhere; but the real history of American discovery commences with Columbus, in 1492. From that time, however, the leading maritime nations of Europe vied with each other in prosecuting discoveries in the new world. Even before the Spaniards had set foot on the continent itself, the English, under Cabot, had been on the coast of Labrador: the Portuguese, under Cortereal, and the French, under Verazzani, soon followed; and there is no doubt that from the very beginning of the 16th century, the Norman, Breton and Basque fishermen were in the habit of frequenting the Banks of Newfoundland and the coasts of Nova Scotia and New England.

The first important attempt of the French to make a settlement was that conducted by Jacques Cartier. In his first voyage, in 1534, he explored the Gulf of the St. Lawrence. In the second, in 1535, he ascended the river as far as Montreal; and of his adventures and his dealings with the natives we have a detailed and interesting account. The third, in 1541, under the auspices of the Sieur de Roberval, was a real attempt at a settlement. A considerable number both of men and women were brought out, and they remained two winters at Quebec and the Isle

of Orleans. But the colonists were badly chosen, being, in fact, to a great extent, the refuse of the gaols, and the projected settlement proved a total failure. The fourth and last voyage, in 1543, was merely undertaken to bring back the remains of this miserable colony.

The next great attempts at colonization made by the French were in a different direction. Successive expeditions were fitted out for the coast of Florida, under Ribaut in 1562, and under Laudonnière in 1564, and Gourgues in 1567. In one of them no less than 600 settlers were taken out; but they all miserably failed, either from dissensions amongst the colonists themselves or from the hostility of the Spaniards.

Ever since Cartier's time a connection had been kept up by the French with the St. Lawrence, and trading voyages had been made to Tadousac, which was, and long continued to be, the head-quarters of the trade. The Indians used to assemble there from the adjoining parts, and even from as far in the interior as Lake Huron, carrying across from the head-waters of the Ottawa to those of the Saguenay. Even as late as 1670, Charlevoix says that there were rarely less than 1,200 Indians encamped about Tadousac in the trading season. In later times Montreal and Three Rivers vied with it as the emporiums of trade; but in those early days the French never went higher up the St. Lawrence than Tadousac. There were even some attempts to establish a permanent post there, but none of them were successful.

In 1603 the real founder of Canada first appears on the scene. The Commandeur de Chaste, having received a commission to that effect, sent out an expedition to make a permanent settlement on the St. Lawrence, and Champlain was one of his captains on a preliminary voyage. They reached Montreal for the first time since the days of Cartier, and even advanced across the Lachine rapids to take a

general survey of the country beyond; but on their return, finding De Chaste dead, the idea of a settlement was for the time abandoned.

The next year Pierre du Guast, Sieur de Monts, took up De Chaste's commission, and organized an expedition to the Atlantic coast, in which Champlain, Potrincourt, and Pontgravé (prominent names in discoveries of that time) had commands. We have a very interesting and detailed account of this expedition by Champlain himself, and another by Lescarbot, an adventurous lawyer who accompanied it. They spent three years on the coast, exploring it from Cape Cod to Gaspé, wintering first at Ste. Croix, in the estuary of the Passamaquoddy, and then at Port Royal, near where Annapolis now stands. But nothing came of these explorations at the time. Potrincourt, indeed, returned to Port Royal in 1610, and established a settlement there, under the patronage of Madame de Quercheville, Duchesse de la Rochefoucault de Laincourt, and in charge of a mission of Jesuits; but in 1613 the colony, which had never gained any strength, was broken up by the English.

Up to this time all the French attempts at settlement had been very unfortunate; but in the meantime De Monts had changed his plan, and in 1608 he sent out another expedition to the St. Lawrence, under Champlain as his lieutenant, who laid the foundation of Quebec, and spent the winter there. This is the real commencement of the History of La Nouvelle France.

From the very first, Champlain entered upon a course of policy the evil effects of which continued for more than a century to be felt by the colony which he had founded. In order to gain influence with the Indians whom he encountered, he joined them in their wars against their native enemies. But the Indian tribes with whom he associated himself were scattered and unwarlike, whilst their opponents were not only united under some semblance

of a regular government, but proved themselves afterwards to be the most enterprising and warlike of all the native tribes of North America. These unprovoked aggressions created an undying hostility to the French on the part of the Iroquois, which troubled all the earlier years of the colony, and was never effaced so long as they retained any hold upon the continent. The Dutch, on the contrary, and after them the English, entered into amicable relations with the Iroquois, or the Five Nations, as they designated them; and in their wars with the French these Indians always proved trustworthy and faithful allies. From their own traditions we learn that in the earlier times they had been unable to cope successfully with their antagonists, and had been obliged to confine themselves to their settlements in the northern parts of the present State of New York; but their better organization and the fire-arms which they obtained from their Dutch and English allies enabled them to take the ascendancy, and a dreadful retribution awaited the French and their allies.

In 1609, the first year after the foundation of Quebec, Champlain joined in one of these expeditions, in which he penetrated to the head of the lake which still bears his name, and there inflicted a defeat upon the Iroquois; and in 1610 he again met them about the mouth of the Richelieu river. In these early years Champlain himself used generally to return to France for the winter, leaving a party behind him at Quebec; and some of his men were usually left with his Indian friends to spend the winter with them, for the purpose of learning their language and habits, and of gaining some insight into the character of the country. Thus, from the very commencement, that class of semi-savage hunters and traders was established, who acted as interpreters and played such an important part in the early history of the colony; and who in after times, under the name of *coureurs de bois*, seem to have given the Governors almost as much trouble as the Indians themselves.

One of these, Nicholas de Vignau by name, had wintered with the Algonquins in the upper waters of the Ottawa, and, meeting with Champlain in France in 1612, told him that he had penetrated by that route as far as Hudson's Bay, which had just been discovered by the English, and had witnessed the wreck of an English vessel there, and the capture of its crew by the Indians. Champlain himself spent the whole of that year in France, engaged in procuring an influential protector for his infant colony, in consequence of the death of the Count de Soissons, who had hitherto patronized it. The Prince of Condé having obtained a commission as Lieut.-General of New France, Champlain, in 1613, fitted out a new expedition, and immediately on his arrival proceeded to ascend the Ottawa, with the expectation of reaching the Northern Sea. In his account of this expedition he gives a clear description of the Chaudière and Rideau Falls, and of the site of the present capital of the country he founded; but we must look upon De Vignau as the first white man who had ever set foot upon it. Champlain only went up the river as far as Allumette Island, where the Indians convinced him that De Vignau had deceived him, and that there was no means of reaching Hudson's Bay by that route; so he returned once more to France, disappointed, and has handed De Vignau down to posterity as the greatest liar he ever met with.

Another year was now spent in France, getting up a company of merchants at St. Malo, Rouen, and La Rochelle, to raise the means for a new expedition; for, though Condé gave his patronage, he was very chary of his money. A matter of equal importance for the colony also engaged Champlain's attention. He entered into negotiations with the Recollets, a branch of the Franciscan order, to undertake the spiritual charge of his young settlement. In 1615 he brought out with him four of the friars, and built the first chapel on the site of what is now Champlain market, whilst the Franciscans established their convent where the Marine

Hospital now stands. Immediately upon his arrival he engaged in another expedition against the Iroquois, which led to the most important of his discoveries in the interior of the country. Accompanied by a dozen Frenchmen and one of his new missionaries, Father le Caron, he ascended the Ottawa to the Matawan. Hence carrying across to Nipissing, they descended the French river to Lake Huron, and coasted along to the country of the Hurons, near Lake Simcoe. Here they collected their forces at a village called Cahigué, and thence crossed Lake Simcoe, and carried across to that chain of lakes which empties itself by the river Trent into the Bay of Quinté. Crossing the foot of Lake Ontario they landed, and, proceeding through the woods, they crossed the Oswego river where it comes out of Lake Oneida, and attacked their enemy in a fort somewhere near Lake Onondaga. The expedition was a failure, and they returned by the way they came; and Champlain, who had been wounded in the encounter, being unable to induce the Indians to send a canoe with him down the St. Lawrence, returned with his allies to their own country. During the winter he visited some other tribes, and learned a great deal about the interior, from description, all of which is laid down in the map which he published.

This was the most important of all Champlain's expeditions, both from its extent and from the relations which it established between the French and the Indians of the interior; and to me it has always been doubly interesting, as the course which he took was through a part of the country where, a little more than two hundred years later, I was one of the first European settlers. From the peculiar route by which they approached it, they took Upper Canada, as it were, in the rear; and thus the first part on which a white man ever trod did not receive any permanent settlers until forty or fifty years ago. Considering the importance of this expedition, it is amazing to see the way in which all mention of it is omitted, and the erroneous

accounts given where it is alluded to by any of our historians. Some years ago, at Quebec, in a paper communicated to the "TRANSACTIONS" of your Society, I had occasion to argue against the German School of Historical Critics, who would throw a doubt upon the reality of the events related in ancient history, from the inconsistencies in the various narratives of them; and I brought forward as an instance to the contrary this incident in our own history, for which we have the best of all evidence—that of the published words of the chief actor himself. Champlain's account is clear and intelligible, as almost all his local descriptions are; and if that is not enough, we have his map with his course laid down upon it: yet, with the book before them, hardly two can relate the story in the same way. The earliest of our historians, Lescarbot, Sagard, Du Creux, La Potterie, and Colden, omit mention of it altogether; and Charlevoix disposes of it in a few brief sentences, which give no clue to the route or destination of the expedition. We have in our records an official document signed by Louis XIV. himself, and by his great minister, Colbert, in which Champlain's discoveries are set forth as proving the title of France to its possessions in North America; and it would be difficult for the most ingenious person, in a few words, to string together so many misstatements. The words are these: "En l'année 1611 et 1612 il monta par la grande rivière jusqu'au lac Huron, qu'on appelle la Mer Douce; de là il fut à la nation du Petun, puis à la nation Neutre, et à celle des Mascoutins, qui demeuraient alors vers l'endroit qu'on appelle Sakiman. De cet endroit il alla vers les sauvages Algonquins et Hurons en guerre contre les Iroquois. Il passa par des lieux qu'il a décrits lui-même dans son livre, qui ne sont autres que le Détroit et le lac Erié." Now, as to the date assigned: in 1611 he was only about six weeks in Canada, and never advanced beyond Montreal; and in 1612 he never even left the shores of France. Setting aside this error in the date, he certainly was amongst the Petuns,

though after, and not before, his expedition; but of the Neuters and Mascoutins he expressly says that he was unable to visit them. As to his then going towards the Algonquins and Hurons to attack the Iroquois, we may give the author of the memoir the benefit of the supposition that "*vers*" was written by mistake for "*avec*," which would make better sense; but he certainly never was near Detroit, and of Lake Erie he knew so little that he never mentions the name, and it is only represented by an imaginary river on his map. The chief modern authority is Garneau, who, besides several minor errors throughout, mistakes Champlain's Mer Douce (which was Lake Huron) for Lake Ontario. He winds up by saying that Champlain spent the winter south of Lake Ontario, amongst the Neuters, whilst we know that he really spent it in the neighbourhood of Lake Simcoe, amongst the Hurons and Petuns. Moreover, the Neuters did not live south of Lake Ontario, but in the western peninsula of what is now Upper Canada, all except one outlying village at Niagara Falls; and we have Champlain's express word for it that he never visited it at all. I have seen one school-history which makes Champlain collect his allies on Green Bay, in Lake Michigan, and attack the Iroquois Fort somewhere on the Georgian Bay—a singular locality in which to find an Iroquois Fort in 1615; and a more pretentious one makes Cahiagué at the foot of Lake Huron, and the enemy's fort at Detroit. But the most remarkable jumble is to be found in Murray's *British North America*; and it is all the more singular because he evidently had Champlain open before him, and gives the mustering of the allies and the attack on the fort in great detail. He is all right as far as the country of the Hurons, whence, he says, they descended a small chain of lakes (which you will look for in vain on the map) to Lake Huron, and coasted along to its extremity, where they landed, and went—a four-days' journey, one must remember—to Lake George, where Champlain really did attack the Iroquois six years before.

Such are the various accounts given of this expedition by historians who notice it at all ; and of all the histories I have seen (and I have looked into most of them), I have found only three which give anything like a true description of it—Broadhead's History of New York, the late Abbé Ferland's admirable course of lectures on Canadian History, and Dr. Miles' History, published within the last year or two. If this is a fair sample of the way in which history is written, we may well doubt if we have a true statement of details where the original authorities have not come down to us, though it would be pushing scepticism too far to reject on that account the reality of the main events themselves.

This was the last expedition undertaken by Champlain himself, who for the rest of his life devoted himself to superintending the affairs of his colony at Quebec, with occasional visits to France. The Recollets, however, pursued their missionary labours amongst the distant tribes, assisted some years later in their pious work by the Jesuits, whom they had called in to their aid ; and here again we find a systematic garbling of history, which may be taken as an example of what has probably occurred in other periods where we have had no opportunity of examining the original authorities.

In 1615 Champlain brought out with him, as I have before stated, four Recollet friars, one of whom accompanied him in his expedition into the interior, and founded a mission amongst the Hurons. A few years later the Recollets called in some Jesuits to their assistance, and the new-comers lived harmoniously with them as guests in the Recollet convent. Sagard says their friends warned them that they were introducing dangerous inmates, who would supplant them ; but he says he cannot believe such a thing of the reverend Fathers. But the whole Canadian colony was soon after broken up by the English, and on the return of the French the Jesuits alone had control of the ecclesiastical affairs of the country. From that time all mention of the Reco!lets,

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who were the real pioneers of Christianity in Canada, is systematically suppressed; and in Du Creux's history and the Relations des Jésuites, it would take a very microscopic examination to detect that the Jesuits ever had any predecessors in Canada. To such an extent is this carried, that although in Champlain's original journal a detailed account is given of his negotiations for bringing them out and of their first proceedings, in the collected edition of his voyages, published in 1632 (which is the one most generally known, and the only one which has been translated into other languages), all allusion to them is suppressed. If Champlain said, in 1619, that Father le Caron addressed the Indians on the new faith which he was introducing to them, in 1632 he is made to say that he addressed them himself. If le Caron's name is casually mentioned in the first edition, in the second the sentence is altered or omitted, and that so carelessly that in one case the omission has hopelessly confused the dates.

This may not appear a point of great importance; but in the early records of Canada the missions occupy such a prominent position that no history of the country can be considered complete which does not give to them their due weight. At the period of which I am speaking, it was through them mainly that any addition was made to the information already collected by Champlain. The *coureurs de bois*, also, as was their custom, associated themselves with the Indians, and penetrated into the back country in every direction. From these united sources some further knowledge of the interior was obtained, which we find recorded in Champlain's map of 1632; but there is not much there which was not discovered, or described by him, in 1615. For fifty years—indeed, from that time—no great accession seems to have been gained to their knowledge of the country; and even as late as 1663 we find the Governor of that day saying that Lake Superior is supposed to empty itself in the direction of New Spain.

No events of importance are recorded for several years ; but we gather that the colony advanced very slowly, and some years afterwards only numbered about fifty individuals. Louis Hébert was the first man who, in 1617, brought out his family ; and the first marriage took place the next year, a daughter of Hébert's being the bride.

The ecclesiastical registers are preserved almost from the first—not the originals, indeed, which were burned in 1640, but a copy made out at the time, from the records of different families ; and in them we find the ancestors of the LeMoines, Bouchers, Gagnons, Cauchons, and other well-known Canadian names. Eighty years afterwards, Leclercq says that 900 people counted their descent from Louis Hébert. The first baptism recorded in the register is that of a son of Abraham Martin, a Scotchman, and a well-known pilot of his day, and who has left his name to posterity in connection with his farm on the plains of Abraham.

In 1629 Quebec was taken by the English ; and when it was restored in 1632, Hébert's family at Quebec and two or three settlers who had remained at Three Rivers, with a few *coureurs de bois* amongst the Indians, were the only remnants of the original colony. A new company of the *Cent Associés*, under the patronage of Cardinal Richelieu, was formed ; and Champlain, collecting his scattered companions, returned to his Government, and died there, 1635.

The new colony had hardly acquired any consistency before the Iroquois wars commenced. The friendly tribes were attacked and massacred, the missions broken up, and all trade was interrupted. The posts at Montreal and Three Rivers were attacked, as were the settlements in the Isle of Orleans ; and the Iroquois even made incursions as low down the river as Tadousac. Succour came very sparingly from France ; and somewhat later, even Quebec itself was beleaguered by a force of 700 Indians. During this period of distress overtures were made to the New-England colonies,

with which the French were for the time on friendly terms, to undertake a joint war to put down the Iroquois. This the authorities of the colony declined to do, as they had no immediate cause for hostilities; but private individuals, it appears, were not so scrupulous. It is curious to see how history often repeats itself, and how small a difference a couple of centuries make in the national character. Many, no doubt, remember how, during the Crimean war, when the siege of Sebastopol hung rather heavy on hand, the American newspapers were full of hits at the incompetence of the effete nations of Europe; and some even proposed that a company should be got up to take Sebastopol for us on contract. Now, it appears that about this time a certain Major Québin, who is called the Major of Boston, made a proposal that for the sum of £20,000 he would undertake the total destruction of the Iroquois. We learn this from a despatch of D'Avaugour, who was Governor of Canada a few years later, and who suggests that it might be well to enquire whether the Major was still in the same mind, even at a much greater price.

I had some curiosity to ascertain who this Major *Québin* might be, who seemed a worthy progenitor of those who in our own time offered to take the capture of Sebastopol off our hands, and after some search in the Massachusetts records I have identified him. There was a certain Major Edward Gibbon, who is frequently mentioned in the records as a delegate to the General Court, and often entrusted with important negotiations. He evidently was a prominent man of war amongst them, and was more than once chosen as Major-General in various expeditions against the Indians. The title given to him in the despatch, of the *Major of Boston*, seems an odd one; but he appears to have acted as a sort of Chief of Police there, with the title of Sergeant-Major of the town, which would account for the designation. But what appears most clearly to identify him with the Major Québin of the French despatches is, that in 1653, when

war was imminent with the French, and there was a prohibition against any one trading with them, a special exemption was made in favour of Major Gibbon, on account of the importance of the transactions which he had with them.

But better times were approaching. During all the previous history of Canada some great man about the Court had been selected as the patron of the new colony, and a company of merchants and others had been established, who had the trade, and to a great extent the Government, in their hands. The King, indeed, was the nominal Lord; but the company were the proprietors, and their interest in the colony was principally to make money, the well-being of the settlers being a secondary consideration. Latterly, indeed, the exclusive privileges of trade had been relaxed, and the Crown had interfered more in the management; but in 1663 there was an entire change in this respect. The Company of the Cent Associés surrendered all their rights and were abolished, and Canada was annexed as part of the Crown Domain.

After this cession of the colony by the Company to the Crown, a period of comparative prosperity followed. The Indian troubles, indeed, still continued at intervals, but there was more vigour in the Administration and better concerted means of defence. Some standing force of regular troops was kept up in the country, and forts were erected at important points. Those at Sorel and Chambly restrained the incursions of the Iroquois, who usually followed the Richelieu river in their expeditions; and that at Kingston, which bore the name of the new Governor Frontenac, was the first step towards curbing their power and affording security to the trade on Ontario. Others soon followed at Niagara, Detroit, and on Lake Huron; and at a great gathering of the western tribes at Makinaw, Perrot succeeded in establishing the French influence on a permanent basis.

During the same period the tide of discovery rolled rapidly westward. Trading-posts were established on Lake Superior, and pushed on towards the northwest. In 1673 Joliet and Marquette ascended the Outagami from Green Bay on Michigan, and, carrying across to the Wisconsin river, followed it down to the Mississippi, which they descended as far as the confluence of the Arkansas; when, being satisfied that it flowed into the Gulf of Mexico, they returned by way of the Illinois river to the extremity of Lake Michigan. In 1679 La Salle pursued the latter course with larger means, and the Mississippi was followed to its mouth. The foundation was thus laid for that chain of forts, from Quebec to New Orleans, which surrounded the English possessions, and at one time seemed likely to make the French the predominating influence on this continent.

From the time of Champlain till the assumption of the Government by the Crown, we have mainly to rely for information upon the ecclesiastical records. They are, naturally, principally directed to their own special subject; but in the reports from the several missions, and in the journals kept by the Jesuits and Ursulines, we may glean many interesting facts as to the general progress of the colony, as to the Indian troubles, as to the social condition of the scattered settlements, and as to the early history of many of the old families, whose descendants we still find amongst us. But from the time when Canada came more immediately under the dominion of the Crown, we have a very perfect series of official documents, consisting of the despatches to and from the Governors and Intendants, edicts and ordinances, censuses and reports upon various subjects. Besides such as are preserved in Canada, we have copies of those in the French archives, some in the Parliamentary library, and the most interesting series in that of our own Society. From the minute details in which the French Government used to interfere, these give a very

lively and interesting picture of the state of society in the country. In the earlier documents protection against the Iroquois is the principal topic, and there are some amusing instances of that ignorance of the country with which we are occasionally still inclined to charge our own Colonial Office. A certain *Sieur de Gaudais* appears to have been sent out in 1663 to report upon the state of the country; and he is instructed, among other things, to enquire whether, as the thick forests enable the Indians to steal unperceived on the settlements, it would not be possible, by setting fire to the woods in winter, when a strong wind is blowing, so to clear the country as to make it at once available for settlement and safe from the stealthy foe. Some similar suggestion seems to have been made to the Governor, *D'Avaugour*, for he replies that the proposal to fence in the country by a line of palisades impenetrable to the Iroquois appears to him impossible.

A much more practicable measure was strongly insisted upon in successive despatches, viz., the gathering of the people together into villages—it being kindly left to the Governor to decide whether they are to be laid out of a round or a square shape—and the discouragement of scattered settlements. For this purpose the grants of all lands beyond a certain size which have not been cleared are to be resumed, and the forfeited land is to be distributed to new settlers. This system, however, seems to have been carried too far; for, about fifty years later we find edicts forbidding any man to build a house on a piece of land of less than $1\frac{1}{2}$ arpents frontage by 40 in depth, and special edicts for pulling down certain specified houses which had been erected in contravention of the law. There are also edicts forbidding the *habitans* from the country from coming to live in the towns without special license, and fining those who harbour them.

Another point which engages the attention of the Government is the prevention of that tendency to wander

off on hunting and trading expeditions, which from the first was so characteristic of the French in America. In 1673 there is an ordinance setting forth the injury to the colony arising from this cause, and forbidding any Frenchman, whether domiciled or not, from wandering in the woods for more than 24 hours without express permission of the Governor, on pain of death. In 1676 the prohibition to trade at a distance is repeated, with a reduced penalty for first offences; but the Governor himself is restricted from granting any such permission as was previously allowed. And two years later there is another ordinance setting forth how the former one against trading has been eluded, under the pretence of excursions for the purpose of hunting. The Governors are, therefore, forbidden to grant any permission to hunt at a greater distance from the settlement than one league. The next year there is a little relaxation of the former enactment, by the permission to the Governors to grant licenses to hunt at a greater distance from the settlements between the 15th of January and the 15th of April; but this is the greatest latitude which appears to have been allowed. As to trading expeditions, they continued to be strictly forbidden, and the punishment—by an ordinance of 1681—is to be whipped and branded for the first offence, and the galleys for life for a second. How utterly powerless the Government was, in spite of the severity of these enactments, to prevent the wandering habits of the settlers, is shewn by the constant complaints upon the subject in subsequent despatches, and by a whole series of ordinances in after years, granting amnesties to those who will come in before a certain date, with renewed threats of punishment to those who do not return.

The growth of the colony being the first object of Government, emigration was to be encouraged, and at the same time the natural increase of the population was to be fostered. For this purpose there is an arrêt of the Council of State in 1670, making a grant, to be called the King's

Present, of 20 livres to every couple that is married, if the man (or rather boy) is under 20 and the girl under 16 ; and parents are to be subject to a fine who do not marry off their children before those ages. There is also to be an annual pension of 300 livres to every person who has a family of 10 living children, and of 400 if he has 12 or more ; and there are to be certain honours and trusts to the principal inhabitants of the parishes and villages, with precedence in the churches and elsewhere ; and for these honourable situations the men with the largest families are to be preferred. As the natural supply of wives was deficient (for the census of 1667 shews that there were only 55 unmarried girls above 14), cargoes of the article were sent out ; and it may be interesting to preserve the record that a certain Mademoiselle Etienne appears to have been the Miss Rye of that day. In 1670 the Intendant Talon reports that out of 165 sent out the year before only 15 remained on hand, and they were engaged, but distributed amongst the other families until their destined husbands could support them. He asks for 150 to 200 more, but strongly recommends that those sent out shall not be naturally deformed, or have anything exteriorly repulsive in their personal appearance ; from which I conclude that the last batch was not exactly a fair sample of *la belle France*. Perhaps it was partly for this reason that it was found necessary to use stringent measures to get the *coureurs de bois* to marry ; for Talon, in a mémoire of that date, proposes that all bachelors shall be excluded from trade, and from the honours of the church and the communauté, who do not marry within 15 days after the ships come in ; and he asks for authority to take stronger measures still with them. He also suggests that a few girls of good birth, and distinguished for their accomplishments, shall be sent out for the benefit of the young officers, whom it is desirable to induce to settle in the country. We do not hear what the total number of the second importation was, but it would appear that the market had been somewhat

overstocked ; for, in 1671 Talon asks that no more girls should be sent out the next year, lest the settlers should not be able to find husbands for their daughters ; and he intimated that, whilst he had asked for 4 or 5 for the officers, they had sent him 15, whom he did not find it easy to dispose of. But it was after all only a temporary glut, for the following year Frontenac asks for more women. This, however, is the last account I have found of an importation of this kind, and at a later period the women were considerably in excess of the men. Even the officers seem to have had no difficulty in finding wives ; for a subsequent Governor, the Marquis de D enonville, after enumerating the captains whom he has married off, appears to be not a little concerned about some of the younger officers, whom he finds it difficult to restrain from forming connections which may not be altogether palatable to their relations at home.

As far as the increase of the population is concerned, the experiment seems to have been successful ; for the year after the first batch arrived Talon reports 700 births, and says that the bishop anticipated a crop of 1,100 the following year, which is pretty well, considering that four years before, in 1668, the whole population only numbered 5,870. I am afraid, however, that the bishop reckoned his chickens too sanguinely, for in 1674 the census only gave the population at 7,832, which naturally a good deal surprised the authorities at home ; and in 1680 there were only 9,400 in all—404 births and 66 marriages.

The fact of the despatches of this period being so full of such domestic matters is in itself a proof of the comparative tranquility and prosperity which prevailed. But soon after the Indian troubles recommenced, and war broke out with the English colonies. Canada, however, had now grown out of its infancy : the principal settlements were firmly established, and all the machinery of Government was thoroughly organized ; and as I only undertake to give

some account of the early French settlements, I may omit all mention of the later incidents in the history of the colony; of the fluctuating periods of prosperity and of suffering; and of the events which, from the neglect of the Home Government and the growing power of the English colonies, finally led to its conquest.

Two reflections must suggest themselves to any one who carefully studies these early annals of our country. There are few such opportunities of tracing from contemporary authorities the extraordinary mutability to which uncivilized tribes are subject. When Cartier entered the St. Lawrence he found permanent villages at Quebec and Montreal; but 60 years later, in Champlain's time, there were only a few scattered Montagnais about Quebec, and no Indian villages within many leagues of Montreal. Who the Indians were that Cartier met with it is not easy to determine; but there can be no doubt, from the fragments of their language preserved by him, as well as from their habits of life, living in walled villages, that they belonged to some branch of the great Iroquois stock. The traditions of the Indians themselves, as handed down to us by subsequent writers, leave the point doubtful. The Algonquins said that they had been driven from Montreal by the Hurons. The Iroquois, according both to Cadwallader Colden, their special historian, and to Perrot, represent themselves to have been the original holders of that important post. One thing, however, is certain, that when we first become clearly acquainted with them, the two great sections of the Indian race were as distinctly separated in the territory they occupied as in their language and customs. That section which we may call Algonquins or Chippeways, though divided into different tribes, occupied the coasts of New England, Nova Scotia, and the Gulf of St. Lawrence. We find them on the north shore of the Lower St. Lawrence, on the head-waters of the streams running into the Ottawa, and

on the Ottawa itself, but not lower than Allumette Island, on Lake Nippising, and the Manitoulin Islands. They lived a wandering life, as hunters, rarely settling in permanent villages, and those not fortified. The other section cultivated the ground extensively, and lived in walled villages. The Five Nations, whose French name of Iroquois may be extended to the whole stock, occupied the northern parts of the State of New York, from the head of Lake Champlain to Niagara. Beyond them were the Eries, and north of the Lakes the Neuters, in the western peninsula; the Petuns on the north shore, from Collingwood to Owen Sound, and the Hurons on the small tract between Lake Simcoe and Lake Huron. These all belonged to one stock, though often deadly enemies. But the intervening country, embracing all the Upper St. Lawrence and the most fertile tracts of what is now Upper Canada, was a desert—a neutral ground, in which neither of the hostile races made any settlement. Champlain describes the chain of Lakes by which he descended to Ontario as fringed with the sites of old villages and clearings, which had been deserted—a description which is borne out by the present aspect of the country, in which I myself could point out 15 or 20 of such ancient vestiges. Tradition points to it as the former country of the Hurons, who had been driven from it by the wars; and who, when we first became acquainted with them, had taken refuge in the narrow limits of the peninsula comprised between Lake Simcoe, Matchedash Bay, and Lake Huron, where they occupied 23 villages, and must have numbered 30,000 souls, almost equal to the population which that territory now supports. In not much more than 50 years after this the whole aspect of the country had changed. The Hurons had been extirpated, except a small remnant who took refuge in the far-west and a few families who came down with their missionaries to Quebec; and even these were not safe from their deadly enemies. The Petuns, the Neuters, the Eries, the Illinois, and the Delawares, had

shared the same fate; and the conquering Iroquois were dominant from Long Island Sound to Lake Michigan, and from the mouth of the Susquehannah to Nipissing. It is melancholy to look over a map of the period, like Lahontan's, and to compare it with those of earlier date. The Iroquois wars had told their tale in the meantime; and where Champlain indicates populous tribes, we have only the ominous symbol of a death's-head and cross-bones, with the legend, "*Nation détruite.*" All this had occurred without the intervention of the white man; and there has been no disappearance of a savage race, since the diseases and vices which civilization brings in its train, which has surpassed, even if it has equalled in completeness and rapidity, the desolation which the conquering Iroquois spread around them. They, too, have now nearly vanished from the scene of their former power under other influences, and may soon, like the Eries and Hurons, be remembered only by a name; and when we find such extraordinary vicissitudes occurring during the brief space of which we have any certain record, we cease to be so much surprised at the total disappearance of the Mound-Builders and other pre-historic races.

The other point to which I would call your attention is the extraordinary rapidity with which the French spread themselves over the continent, as compared with the progress of the English. The commencement of the colony may date from the foundation of Quebec by Champlain in 1608, one year after the permanent establishment of the English at Jamestown, and one year before that of the Dutch at New York, and 12 years before the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers at Plymouth. The colonies, therefore, commenced nearly on equal terms; yet within seven years the French had reached Lake Haron, whilst it was nearly a century before the English had extended to any considerable distance from the sea-coast. The Iroquois wars now broke out, which for many years confined the French almost entirely to the Lower St. Lawrence; but no sooner were they brought to a close,

or, rather, succeeded by a hollow truce, than the tide of discovery, which had been pent-up, spread over the whole continent, and in a very few years extended to the North Sea, the Gulf of Mexico, and to the Rocky Mountains. Much of this difference must, no doubt, be ascribed to the facilities afforded by our immense chain of lakes and rivers; and much to the missionary spirit of the Recollets and Jesuits, who penetrated, spite of dangers and privations, to every tribe where there was a chance of propagating the faith. Something, too, may be due to the ambition of the Government at home, which was latterly constantly prompting its Governors to the acquisition of new territory, whilst the British were left very much to themselves. But the difference must mainly be attributed to the national character of the settlers themselves. The Englishman, grave and earnest, settled himself at once on his farm, and devoted any leisure he could spare to framing laws for the government of the society which surrounded him, and in determining the religious disputes which arose amongst them. He was essentially a member of a community, and rarely pushed beyond reach of his neighbours and the vicinity of his church and village council until lack of space compelled the hive to give off a swarm. The Frenchman, on the contrary, with characteristic impetuosity, leaving the cares of State to the Governor and the Intendant, and the questions of religion to his priests, plunged at once into the excitement and adventure, which, in spite of its hardships, gives such an irresistible charm to a half-savage life. We have seen the constant endeavours to check this tendency of the population to wander, and the stringent edicts which prohibited any excursions beyond the limits of settlements. But nature is stronger than laws, and the *coureurs de bois* were to be found everywhere, and often, no doubt, where no record of their adventures has been preserved. Only eight years after Champlain's great expedition, at the time when Quebec could count barely 50 inhabitants, we find Sagard,

whilst a missionary amongst the Hurons, on Lake Simcoe, speaking of a welcome supply of meat which had been given to him by a party of French hunters.

If the Celt has marked his progress on this continent by the dash and *élan* which characterizes him as a soldier, but cannot always resist long-continued obstacles, the Saxon has equally exhibited the invincible tenacity which enables him to advance step by step, in spite of difficulties, and to keep what he gains. We in Canada have a union of the two races, and we are not without indications that each has modified the tendencies of the other. Let us hope that a new nation may have been founded here, and that it may combine the best characteristics of the two great nations of the old world from which we are descended.



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