View from Chateau Frontenac, Quebec, showing Champlain's Monument.

THE HISTORY OF QUEBEC

CHAPTER I.

Discovery of the St. Lawrence River, 1534—Cartier arrives at Stadacona, 1535—His visit to Hochelaga—Winter of 1535-1536 at Stadacona—Roberval and Cartier, 1541—Fishermen and traders in the gulf, 1540-1600—Pontgravé—Champlain at Montreal, 1603—De Monts, Champlain and Pontgravé in Acadia, 1605.

HE modern Province of Quebec is the result of two cross currents of history. The mingling of the streams commences at a comparatively recent date; but from their diverging point the main stream leads back to the earliest days of the French regime. The incorporation of French Canada within the British Empire was for the French Canadian people a change of political moment only. The new sovereignty accepted the distinctive institutions of the old regime; and with these, society went on much as it had before the change. These distinctive institutions—the Church, the law, education and land tenure—developed under a political administration which the fortunes of war, culminating in the year 1760, brought to an abrupt termination. Consequently the political events of the old regime form much less of the actual background of modern Quebec than the institutions which survive, many of them, to the present day. It seems advisable, therefore, to draw a line between the institutional and the political history of the period, especially after 1663, in order to emphasize, by treating each separately, the continuity of the one and the fortuitous character of the other.

Our narrative begins when soon after the voyage of Cabot in 1497, (some think even before that date), the fisheries off the coast of Newfoundland

attracted adventurous fishermen from the seaport towns of western Europe. Fleets of Bretons, Normans, Basques, Spanish, Portuguese and English used this common fishing ground, their vessels arriving late in the spring and returning towards autumn. These fisherfolk were well acquainted with the southern and eastern shores of Newfoundland, also with Cabot Strait and the Strait of Belle Isle. Cabot Strait they seem to have regarded as the entrance to a bay, and cartographers before 1536 drew an imaginary bay for this region by devising a continuous coast line between Cape Breton and Newfoundland. Over the waters reaching inward from the Strait of Belle Isle a mist of uncertainty likewise spread. Here also, was supposed to be a great bay—the Great Bay, it grew to be called—yet no one knew of its extent. The fishing vessels frequented the Strait of Belle Isle every season, and they knew the "bay" very well as far as the Isle of Brest in the vicinity of the present Eskimo Bay. As early as 1506 the value of the harbour of Brest was recognized. A fanciful narrative published in 1609 by one De Combes speaks of a flourishing settlement consisting of two hundred houses and a thousand inhabitants on its shores.* What is more certain is that the harbour (named by the Bretons after their own Brest in Brittany), served as a rendezvous for the vessels engaged in the more northerly waters off Newfoundland; and that its importance in this respect lasted fully 150 years. It was not very far west from Blanc Sablon, often referred to by explorers, and now on the border line between Quebec and Labrador. Until the time of Cartier, vessels seldom, if ever, ventured beyond Brest into the waters of the Great Bay; the harbour was looked upon as the limit of navigation.

When Cartier made his first voyage in 1534, no one conceived of North America as having the continental form with which we are familiar. Geographers projected a continuous water-passage from Europe to Cathay within the northern parallels of latitude. The reputed voyage of Verazzano, made under the auspices of Francis the First, may have convinced the mariner of St. Malo that there was little hope of seeking this passage south of the present New England coast. But to push on from the harbour of Brest into the unknown waters of the Great Bay—that seemed to offer some

*See for more explanation Royal Society of Canada, 1905, sect. II. p. 3-30.

hope. So we find Cartier sailing across the Atlantic to Brest in 1534, and from this rendezvous starting to explore.

His plan of operations was to coast along the shore line, from bay to bay, and from headland to headland, trusting to fortune to guide him to the Southern Sea that washed the shores of far-away Cathay. Repelled perhaps by the inhospitable coast to the north and west of Brest, Cartier turned his vessels south, and skirted the shore of Newfoundland. By reaching from point to point his course took him, during the summer season, almost completely around the gulf from Brest to Gaspé. Not quite so, however, for at Cape Anguille, on the Newfoundland shore, a sharp wind carried him to within sighting distance of Bird Rock, whence he made for Bryon Island (named after Philip de Chabot, Sieur de Brion, Cartier's patron), thence to the Magdalene group, then the north shore of Prince Edward Island, whence he sighted Escumiac Point, and then up the coast by Miramichi Bay, and Chaleur Bay into the Gaspé Basin. Had it not been for the accident of the high wind at Cape Anguille the vessels would have kept on their course to Cape Ray, thus discovering not only that Newfoundland was an island, but that Cabot Strait and the Strait of Belle Isle were both entrances to the same body of water. This phenomenon, although Cartier suspected it in the course of his first season in the gulf, was not verified till 1536.

From his short stay at Gaspé, Cartier formed a very agreeable impression of the south shore of the St. Lawrence. Here he discovered a fishing party of Indians, and succeeded in persuading two of the younger men, Domagaya and Taignoagny by name, sons of one of the chiefs, to join his company. The complacent Protestantism of Parkman has described this incident in language ill-befitting the actual occurrence. The Indians were lured into the clutches of the French, we are told, "by an act of villainous treachery." No impartial reader of the relation of the voyage could ever come to that conclusion. Domagaya and Taignoagny played a conspicuous part in the voyage of the following year.

Bearing in mind the object of his exploration, Cartier's next move after leaving Gaspé is difficult to explain. Once out of the basin he seems to have sighted Anticosti, and to have headed in that direction, despite the fact that he was crossing open water in the passage. This false move,

for so it must be regarded, can only be accounted for by supposing that Cartier was deceived into thinking the channel between Gaspé and Anticosti to be part of a bay. However, he reached the east point of Anticosti, and then turned west, cruising along the shore as far as North Point on the Mingan Channel. This was the end of his westward course for the season, for at North Point Cartier decided to give up further search that summer.

Favoured by his patron, Cartier returned to Brest the following year with a fleet of three vessels: la Grande Hermine, la Petite Hermine and l'Emerillon. In making his way from Brest along the north shore of the Gulf, he entered, on the 10th of August, a little inlet known as Pillage Bay. It was the Feast of Saint Lawrence, and so, writes the chronicler of the voyage, ''Nous nommasmes la dicte baye la baye Sainct Laurens.'' From this inlet the name St. Lawrence spread by degrees both to the gulf and to the river.

It was soon after leaving the Baye Sainct Laurens, and making for the shores of Anticosti, that Domagaya and Taignoagny explained to Cartier their familiarity with the region. To quote from the original text: ''Et par les deux sauuaiges que auions prins le premier voyage, nous fut dict que cestoit de la dicte terredeuers le Su, &que cestoit une ysle, &que par le Su d'icelle estoit le chemin a aller de Honguedo (Gaspé), ou nous les auions prins lan precedent a Canada: Et que a deux iournees du dict cap & ysle commenceroit le royaulme de Saguenay a la terre deuers le Nort allant vers le dict Canada.'' The expedition sailed around the west point of Anticosti, crossed over to the Gaspé shore and cruised along, later recrossing to the north shore, past the Bay of Seven Islands to the Point des Monts. This, the two Indians declared was the beginning of the kingdom of Saguenay, a habitable country from which copper could be obtained. Cartier noted that the north and south shores were at this point only about thirty leagues (really twenty-five miles) apart. The Indians told him that he was then at the beginning of the great river of Hochelaga, the passage-way to Canada—(Grant Silenne de Hochelaga & chemin de Canada). From here, they said, the river gradually narrowed to Canada, beyond which the stream became fresh; and then the fresh water continued on indefinitely, navigable only by small boats; and that no one, so far as they had heard, was ever

known to have been to the end of it. Here we have the first recorded description of the St. Lawrence valley. The terms Saguenay, Canada, and Hochelaga, as Cartier heard them, have remained a permanent part of the nomenclature of Cartier's discovery.

From Point des Monts Cartier made his way by degrees up the river. He passed the mouth of the Saguenay, describing it as "une riviere fort perfonde & courante, qui est la riviere et chemin du royaulme & terre de Saguenay." On the 8th of September he dropped anchor by the Ile D'Orleans and, taking Domagaya and Taignoagny with him, went on shore. The Indians found themselves at home again, for within a short distance was the group of villages from which they originally came. Their presence at Gaspé the summer before came from an excursion on the part of the villagers for the summer fishing off the peninsula. Great was the rejoicing at the return of the "captives." Cartier and his company received an elaborate visit of welcome from the natives, headed by a chief, Donnacona, from the village of Stadacona. Cartier speaks of Donnacona as the "Sieur de Canada." The season being well advanced, Cartier sought out winter quarters for his fleet. He chose the St. Charles River (named by him the St. Croix), and took the two largest ships up the stream as far as its junction with the Lairet. Here he decided to winter, and began preparations accordingly. But before navigation closed it was his intention to satisfy his curiosity about Hochelaga, of which the Indians had said so much, and he proposed to use the smallest ship, l'Emerillon, for continuing his journey up the river. So far, barring one or two minor disputes, relations with the Indians had been friendly, but Cartier's determination to go to Hochelaga, for some reason or other, sorely displeased Donnacona, and he sought every means to prevent the enterprise. Notwithstanding this display of unfriendliness, Cartier continued his preparations, and on the 19th of September, taking the Emerillon and two boats, he started out.

The water-way from Stadacona to Hochelaga (Montreal), upon which Cartier was about to sail, is bound up with the history of the province through which it flows to a degree only to be appreciated by those who have lived on its banks. Along its course for 160 miles, and along its tributaries, were later to be distributed the towns, the villages, and the seigniories of the

old regime. It was to be the scene of the splendour as well as the tragedy of French colonial life; the especial home of the French Canadian people. One may readily be pardoned for letting the imagination dwell on the picture of the Emerillon, the first vessel to cut these waters with its bow, threading its uncertain way to the "kingdom of Hochelaga"—the pioneer of a new civilization and the harbinger of the mighty traffic of to-day.

The Emerillon left Stadacona on the 19th of September, and on the 28th reached Lake St. Peter. Unable to find the channel of the river in the shallow waters of the lake, Cartier took the risk of leaving his ship behind, and pushed on with his followers in the two boats. By October 2nd they reached Hochelaga and landed amidst the tumultuous welcome of the Indians.

It has been inferred that the village of Hochelaga lay perhaps somewhere in the vicinity of the present Dominion Square in the city of Montreal. A plan of the village is given in Ramusio's collection of Voyages, from which it has been copied into almost every history of Canada. As for the Indians with which Cartier came in contact it is also inferred, from a few hints in his narrative, that they belonged to the Huron-Iroquois stock. Cartier endured with becoming patience the tedious formality of the entertainment proffered by the Hochelaga Indians, and the Indians, in turn, listened with becoming gravity to Cartier's explanation of the mysteries of the Christian faith. But nothing could they tell him of the coveted passage to Cathay. They took him to the top of the mountain to survey the prospect, "la terre la plus belle qu'il est possible de veoir, unye, plaine, & labourable"—Cartier named the mountain Mont Royal. More than a century later, when the village of Hochelaga was no more, and the piety and bravery of a small band of French enthusiasts had called into existence the settlement of Ville-Marie, the name given by Cartier to the noble hill upon which he stood gradually attached itself both to the town growing up under its shadow, and to the island on which it stood. The name Montreal is possibly the oldest geographical term of French origin which has survived in the history of the province, with the exception, perhaps, of Blanc Sablon.

Cartier stayed at Hochelaga but a short time, for on October 11th the Emerillon had joined the other ships in their winter-quarters in the St.

Charles. On the way down Cartier stopped at the present site of Three Rivers to turn into the St. Maurice, called in the narrative "la riuiere du Fouez." Authorities agree in adopting Lescarbot's explanation that the author of the narrative meant to write Foix (Cf. Sulte; Histoire de la Ville des Trois Rivières). On one of the islands at the mouth of the St. Maurice Cartier erected a large cross, probably resembling the one set up the year previous at Gaspé, with an escutcheon at the centre showing fleur-de-lis in relief, and the inscription in large letters: "Vive le Roy de France."

Of the winter passed by the voyagers in the rude fort built at the junction of the Lairet and the St. Charles, it is not necessary to write in detail. The Jacques Cartier monument in Quebec points to the site of the spot where the first Europeans endured the rigours of a Canadian winter. The monument bears on one side the inscription:—

Jacques Cartier

et ses hardis compagnons

les marins

de la Grande Hermine

de la Petite Hermine et de l'Emerillon

passèrent ici l'hiver

de 1535-36.

From October till May their dreary confinement dragged on. Cartier had anticipated the cold, and, singularly enough, none of the company seem to have complained of it. But as the winter drew on scurvy made its appearance (*mal-de-terre,* they called it) and decimated the camp. Not until Cartier learned from one of the Indians the remedy used by the natives was it possible for the French to cope with the malady. A potion made by steeping the leaves and bark of the red spruce proved efficacious; but twenty-five of the men had already succumbed to the disease. His company thus depleted in numbers, Cartier made preparations for the homeward voyage as soon as the river cleared. On May the 3rd he erected

a cross to mark the sovereignty of the King of France. It bore the inscription on the shield:—

Franciscus Primus
Dei Gracia Francorum
Rex Regnat.

The same day he started for France, leaving la Petite Hermine behind, as his crew was only large enough for two vessels. He carried with him Donnacona and nine other Indians, who were taken by a stratagem before the vessels got under way. This act of kidnapping is the one and only questionable manœuvre of which Cartier seems to have been guilty. The fleet was steered a southerly course in the gulf, and passed into the Atlantic through Cabot Strait. Thus ended the memorable voyage of 1535-36.

When Cartier next appeared in the St. Lawrence it was not as leader of another expedition, but merely as a lieutenant in the service of one of the king's courtiers. To place the discoverer of the St. Lawrence in a position subordinate to that of a time-serving courtier has always seemed to Cartier's admirers ungracious. And the courtier in question, Jean François de la Roque, Sieur de Roberval, has been credited with the design of snatching at the laurels due, in all justice, to the St. Malouin. But one hesitates to believe that such were Roberval's intentions. A study of the commission given to Roberval may serve to explain his position. It should be mentioned that Lescarbot, when writing his Histoire de la Nouvelle-France could find no copy of the patent, and succeeding writers who follow Lescarbot as an authority usually overlook the document in question. It should be borne in mind that when, in his second voyage, Cartier found himself brought into a river, that is, into fresh water, the expedition appeared to some extent a failure. But while further exploration seemed uncertain, there might be some reason to hope, so the king probably thought, that the lands already discovered by Cartier would, like Mexico and Peru, contain deposits of the precious metals. In imitation of Spanish colonial policy, then in the first flush of success, he would take formal possession of the "kingdoms of Canada, Hochelaga, and Saguenay," and commence a settlement of the country for the purpose of developing the supposed mines. A

perusal of Roberval's commission leads to this conclusion. Not only was provision made for the government of the settlers, but even the seigniorial system, applied in the next century to the agricultural regime of the colony, was here distinctly foreshadowed. We read in the text of the patent of "fiefs et seigneuries, rellevans et mouvans de nous et nous en faisant les foy et hommage." In other words, Roberval's voyage was intended to be the beginning of the permanent colonization of the regions discovered by Cartier.

Admitting this, we begin to see some reason for subordinating Cartier to Roberval. In devising a scheme for the government of the colony the king had recourse to the one available model at the time, namely, the administration of the French province. On such a model Canada was later administered. To the king it may have seemed somewhat incongruous to bestow on Cartier the civil and military administration of a colony. Even when Champlain sailed to Canada in 1603 he was only "geographe royale et capitaine dans la service de la mer." Granting the self-seeking and profligacy of Roberval's character, it must be clear that, by station at least, he was much more qualified than the "sturdy mariner of St. Malo" to assume the duties of a provincial lieutenant-general in a new colony. To Cartier, therefore, fell the unwelcome task of escorting to the lands which he had discovered an official superior, who as "lieutenant-general et chef ducteur" employed him as a lieutenant.

Cartier and Roberval were to have sailed together in 1541, but Roberval, unable to secure his contingent of settlers in time for the date set for starting, sent Cartier ahead. In August Cartier found himself once more at Stadacona. The Indians treated his arrival with ill-concealed hostility, for Donnacona and the nine others who had been kidnapped on the last voyage were not on board the ships. The excuse that they preferred to remain in France did not deceive the villagers, and Cartier saw that he and his company must remain on guard for their safety. A site for a camp was chosen by the little stream, Cap Rouge, at a safe distance from Stadacona. The camp received the name of Charlesbourg Royal. Before winter set in Cartier went up the river as far as Mont Royal, but returned after assuring himself that the rapids (Sault St. Louis, later Lachine) were impassable.

So far Roberval had not appeared, and when the winter was over, not wishing to risk the arrival of his chief with provisions, Cartier broke up the camp and started for home. Before leaving he gathered together a few specimens of quartz, under the mistaken impression that they were diamonds (hence Cape Diamond), and carefully took them with him.

In the harbour of St. John, Newfoundland, he met Roberval, who had just arrived from France. For reasons which are not altogether clear, Roberval found his lieutenant unwilling to remain with the expedition. Cartier slipped away from the harbour of St. John, taking his men with him, and Roberval was obliged to proceed to Canada alone. He had with him some two hundred followers, and these he managed to conduct to the abandoned camp at Charlesbourg Royal. He renamed the camp François Roy, and made preparations for the winter. But his followers were poorly adapted for the life of pioneers. Many of them had been impressed from prisons at home, and formed an element of disorder which Roberval suppressed only by capital punishment. Fifty died from the scurvy. In the summer of the next year, after an unsuccessful attempt at exploration, chiefly in the Saguenay region, whence Lake St. Jean, the unfortunate expedition sailed for home. The first effort to create a New France had failed.

Not for over fifty years was the effort renewed, and then under quite different circumstances.

In the meantime, the fisheries off the Newfoundland coast continued as before. This traffic became much more extensive after the discoveries of Cartier. Vessels which formerly hovered off the Newfoundland coasts now made their way confidently into the gulf and exploited the fisheries in its waters. Closer association with the natives on the shores led to a barter for furs. It was soon discovered that this new traffic found an excellent market at home, so much so that fishermen became traders as well, and developed an industry which eventually became the economic foundation of future colonial enterprise. Traders pushed their way as far up as the mouth of the Saguenay, and inaugurated the first of those annual fairs with the Indians which became so picturesque a feature of colonial life. Tadoussac was the first, and for many years, the most flourishing trading-

port of New France. But as yet it was only a summer port; the traders came and went the same season.

The profitable nature of the fur traffic led many of the merchants of the seaport towns of France to invest their capital in the gulf trade. As early as 1570 there are to be found traces of an association among the merchants of Rouen. In 1588 we find the first application to the Canadian trade of the principle of monopoly, at that time the basis of all corporate colonial enterprise. In that year Henry III. granted to Jacques Noël, a nephew of Cartier, and to one Etienne Chaton, Sieur de la Jannaye, a monopoly of the Canadian fur traffic for twelve years. The grantees were given the right of settlement, of erecting forts, and of impressing prisoners as colonists. Instantly protests came from all the merchants of the coast towns who enjoyed freedom of traffic in the gulf, and the Parliament of Brittany, refusing to register the patent of monopoly, the king yielded the point, and withdrew his grant the next year. Even before this, in 1577, and again in 1578, the Marquis de la Roche, a Breton nobleman, had conceived the idea of forming a settlement in the new world, but the distracted condition of France, then in the throes of civil war, caused him to postpone the enterprise. When at last the accession of Henry IV. brought peace, the Marquis de la Roche sought a commission from the king, and the year of the Edict of Nantes became "lieutenant-general and gouverneur" of the proposed colony. His attempt to lead an expedition to Canada, and its disastrous result is well known. A part of his company consisted of convicts. When in the vicinity of Sable Island de la Roche adopted the plan of landing his convicts, in order to avoid any possible disturbance from them while selecting and building a settlement. Some forty unfortunates were landed on this desert waste, but de la Roche, encountering a storm, was forced to run before the wind and was unable to return to the island that season. For some years the castaways existed after the manner of savages, and when at last the king sent a ship to their rescue, only a dozen survivors could be found.

Despite the failure of de la Roche, the colonial movement was beginning to grow. Back of the movement the forces at work were few and simple. On the part of the Court was a laudable desire for the colonization

of the lands in North America, and also a pious wish to bring the savages within the pale of Christianity. For either object the king hesitated to make any financial sacrifice. But he could make their fulfilment the condition of a grant of the monopoly of the Canadian trade. This indirect performance of the high function of Church and State, by a sordid appeal to commercial instinct, fettered and degraded the whole question of colonial enterprise for some years to come.

During the next few decades the leading figure in the Canadian movement was François Gravé, Sieur du Pont, or as he is commonly styled in contemporary documents, Dupont-Gravé, shortened into Pontgravé. Pontgravé at first associated himself with one Pierre de Chauvin, of Honfleur. In 1599 Chauvin obtained from Henry IV. the commission which had been granted the previous year to the Marquis de la Roche. Chauvin became lieutenant-general and official head of the enterprise, and Pontgravé general manager of its commercial interests. The two associates, taking with them the Sieur de Monts, sailed in 1600 to plant a settlement on the banks of the St. Lawrence. This was by no means Pontgravé's first voyage to Canada. He was already familiar with the site of Three Rivers, and knew the possibilities of the trade with the Indians there. He would have chosen Three Rivers as the site of the settlement which he and Chauvin had in view. But Chauvin preferred Tadoussac, and the two agreed to make their experiment there. Wooden buildings were put up before winter set in, and sixteen men left to await the arrival of the Indians of the upper Saguenay with their loads of furs the next season.

Chauvin died in 1603, and Pontgravé transferred his partnership to Aymar de Chastes, governor of Dieppe. The two continued the monopoly of the fur trade, though admitting many of the merchants of Rouen, La Rochelle and St. Malo into the enterprise. The expedition which went out in 1603 is memorable as the first occasion in which Champlain sailed into the St. Lawrence. Champlain's career previous to 1603 obviously does not fall within the limits of this history. He was already a navigator of experience, having taken service under the King of Spain as captain of one of the vessels going to the West Indies. At the end of a two years' cruise, during which he had picked up much information about the Spanish possessions in

Central America, he returned to France and received from the king the title of Geographe Royal. Being at Dieppe in 1603, he learned from de Chastes of the sailing of the ships for Canada and solicited a place in the expedition. This was his first introduction to Pontgravé, and the two made their way together into the St. Lawrence. Champlain explored the river as far as the Sault St. Louis, collecting from the Indians all the information possible about the country drained by the Saguenay, the St. Maurice, and the Richelieu. In the account of his exploration which he wrote for the king we find the first mention of the word Quebec. It was the term used by the Algonquins to designate the narrows into which the St. Lawrence contracts by the present city of the name. When Pontgravé and Champlain returned from the expedition of 1603 they found that de Chastes had died. Henry IV. conferred his commission on Pierre Dugas, Sieur de Monts, coupling with it the exclusive privilege of the fur trade for ten years. To the Sieur de Monts, to Pontgravé, and to Champlain was due the founding of Acadia, to which they now directed their attention. It was not till 1608 that, urged by Champlain, and still under the authority of his original charter, which had been revoked but regranted for one year, that de Monts sent out the expedition with which the permanent history of Canada begins.