

venture during the two centuries that followed the landing of Columbus on the soil of the New World. The greed for gold; the passion for adventure; the spirit of chivalry; the enthusiasm and fanaticism of religion,—all conspired to throw into America the hardiest and most daring spirits of Europe, and made the vast wilderness of the New World the theatre of the most stirring achievements that history has recorded.

Early in the sixteenth century, Spain, turning from the conquest of Granada and her triumph over the Moors, followed her golden dreams of the New World with the same spirit that in an earlier day animated her Crusaders. In 1528 Ponce de Leon began his search for the fountain of perpetual youth, the tradition of which he had learned among the natives of the West Indies. He discovered the low-lying coasts of Florida, and explored its interior. Instead of the fountain of youth, he found his grave among its everglades.

A few years later De Soto, who had accompanied Pizarro in the conquest of Peru, landed in Florida with a gallant array of knights and nobles, and commenced his explorations through the western wilderness. In 1541 he reached the banks of the Mississippi River, and, crossing it, pushed his discoveries westward over the great plains; but, finding neither the gold nor the South Sea of his dreams, he returned to be buried in the waters of the great river he had discovered.

While England was more leisurely exploring the bays and rivers of the Atlantic coast, and searching for gold and peltry, the chevaliers and priests of France were chasing their dreams in the North, searching for a passage to China, and the realms of Far Cathay, and telling the mystery of the Cross to the Indian tribes of the far West. Coasting northward, her bold navigators discovered the mouth of the St. Lawrence; and in 1525 Cartier sailed up its broad current to the rocky heights of Quebec, and to the rapids above Montreal, which were afterwards named La Chine, in derision of the belief that the adventurers were about to find China.

In 1609 Champlain pushed above the rapids, and discovered the beautiful lake that bears his name. In 1615 Priest La Caron pushed northward and westward through the wilderness, and discovered Lake Huron.

In 1635 the Jesuit missionaries founded the Mission St. Mary. In 1654 another priest had entered the wilderness of Northern New York, and found the salt springs of Onondaga. In 1659-1660 French traders and priests passed the winter on Lake Superior, and established missions along its shores