

THE OLD MISSION CHURCH AT TADOUSAC, QUÉBEC

TADOUSAC, at the confluence of the Saguenay and St. Lawrence, is one of the most historic spots in Canada. It was here in this corner of the earth where the French founded their first establishments on Canadian soil. From this centre, too, went forth the first missionary Jesuit Fathers whose task and labor it was to convert and civilize the regions of the Saguenay and the mysterious North. One after the other, says a writer, the waters of this bay have been visited by the adventurous embarkations of Cartier, the discoverer, the swift light barks of the Basque and Breton *fibustiers*, the ships of Chauvin, Pontgravé and Champlain. This was the first port entered by the French colonists before their arrival at the rock of Quebec, and it was from here that Druillettes, Dablon and Albanel set out for the distant shores of Lake Mistassinis and Hudson Bay.

Historians are not agreed as to where the first mass was celebrated in Canada, but tradition says that it was on the spot where now stands the village of Tadousac, and Louis Fréchette, the French Canadian poet laureate of Canada, in his *Légende d'un Peuple*, thus refers to the eventful scene. I give the translation :

“ And there beneath the cool green shade,
The parish temple rears its head
On that same favor'd spot, 'tis said,
Where on the altar years ago,
The Saviour's precious blood did flow.
When to the sound of pious song
Borne by the echoes far along,
The mountains with their rounded crest