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NOTE

THE two Commissions here faithfully reproduced, by photographic process, from one of the few extant copies of the original publication of 1605 — that owned by the Lenox Library — record, in striking words, an historic episode of prime importance, the attempted colonization by the French — under the title of New France — of the country later called New England, together with the whole vast territory lying to its north and west. The attempt was made, successively, by two noble gentlemen of France, gallant soldiers and warm personal friends of Henry of Navarre, Henry the Fourth of France. Of these the first was Aymar de Chastes, governor of Dieppe, to whom the King owed a debt of deep gratitude for support given in a time of greatest need. The second, to whom the King entrusted the enterprise upon de Chastes's untimely death, was Pierre de Guast, Sieur de Monts and governor of Pons, to whom the present commissions were issued by the King and his High Admiral Charles de Montmorency on the 18th of December, 1603. The enterprise failed, after a gallant struggle on the part of the Sieur de Monts — aided by Champlain, who came out with him as pilot and geographer, and other friends — but it was largely and well conceived, and bravely striven for. Had it succeeded, carried out in times less troubled, it might well be that France, not England, would have controlled the destiny and development of our northern country, and possibly of North America itself through its control of the St. Lawrence basin and the great Mississippi waterway. That England succeeded where France failed was due not to far-sighted policy or commercial enterprise, but to the sturdy will for religious self-expression of the New England colonists, ready to make every worldly sacrifice for freedom to worship according to their high though narrow sense of truth and right.

GEORGE BUCKNAM DORR.

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