

fisheries, which were left open to all French subjects. The beaver and all the fur-trade was granted to the company for ever. In return for such extensive concessions, the company, which had a capital of 100,000 crowns, engaged to bring into the colony during the first year of their incorporation, 200 or 300 artificers, of such trades as were fitted for their purpose; and 16,000 men before the year 1643. They were to find them in lodging and board, and to maintain them for three years; and afterwards to give them as much cleared land as might be necessary for their subsistence; together with a sufficient quantity of grain to sow it for the first year. A leading object of the company's incorporation was represented to be the propagation of Christianity among the native Indians; and with this view the most liberal provision was made for a numerous staff of missionaries, who accompanied the first settlers to the new colony.

Fortune, however, did not second the endeavours of government in favour of the new association. The first ships fitted out by them were taken by the English, who were lately embroiled with the French on account of the siege of Rochelle. Other disasters speedily followed; the monopolising company fulfilled none of their engagements; and the colonists, becoming clamorous in their complaints against the arbitrary measures and abuses of their administration, one after another of the privileges granted to the company had to be modified or recalled. It was found impossible to enforce the restrictions imposed upon the trade with the Indians, and these soon came, therefore, to be practically regarded by the colonists as a dead letter. Finally, the association itself, unable to accomplish any of the objects for which it had been established, was formally dissolved.

Freed from the incubus of the company's monopoly, the adventurers settled on the banks of the St Lawrence gave full scope to their roving propensities and their love of adventure. Allured by the enormous profits to be derived from the traffic with the Indians, and the unbridled licence of a savage life, these daring and hardy individuals penetrated for hundreds of miles into the wilderness, then, as now, known in Canada as the Indian Country. As the valuable furs soon grew scarce in the neighbourhood of the settlements, the Indians of the vicinity were stimulated to make a wider range in their hunting excursions. They were generally accompanied in these expeditions by some of the traders or their dependents, appropriately named *coureurs des bois*, or rangers of the woods, who shared in the toils and privations of the chase, and at the same time made themselves acquainted with the best hunting and trapping grounds, and with the remote tribes, whom they encouraged to bring their peltries to the settlements.

In this way the trade was augmented, and drawn from remote quarters to Montreal, where, in process of time, all the fur-trade of the colony centered. From this point the traders, ever in quest