

and consigned to prison. When at last he got word to King Henry and was allowed to take a ship out to the rescue of his would-be settlers it was to find himself face to face with one of the dark tragedies of history and to discover only a pitiful remnant of shaggy, despairing creatures who looked more like brutes than men.

They had, at first, been delighted with their liberty, with the balmy freshness of the summer air, with the brief abundance of fresh meat and the wild berries clustering to the lip. But the cattle began to disappear, time commenced to hang heavy on their hands, no returning ship was visible, the heat was occasionally intense, and was suddenly succeeded by the first storms of autumn sweeping over the low and unprotected surface of the level, treeless island. Then came the sense of desertion, the feeling of unutterable despair, the loneliness of intense isolation, the cruel, uncontrolled passion of men without moral or religious scruple. They fought and tried to kill each other and then there came sweeping down, and around them, the wintry storms of the wildest and most exposed spot on the whole Atlantic coast. How any of them ever survived that winter is a marvel—that some did live through it is a fact. Broken in health and heart and fortune, De la Roche returned to France with the miserable remnant of his expedition, and died soon afterwards.

Meanwhile an effort had been made by a naval officer of Rouen, named Chauvin, and a trader of St. Malo, called Pontgravé, to establish a colony on the shores of the St. Lawrence for purposes of fur-trading. They procured from the King certain rights of monopoly and the beginning was made of what eventually became a great business. The small settlement started for this purpose at Tadoussac, near the junction of the Saguenay and the St. Lawrence, was not however as successful in a colonizing sense. Sixteen men were left to hold the port through the winter of 1599 and, in the very season which proved so fatal to the miserable refugees on Sable