

INTRODUCTION

of heroic characters distinguished by their simplicity and by their adherence to the faith of their fathers. Quebec was founded, but nothing more was accomplished at the moment owing to the lack of means. The trials of Champlain now commenced. Day by day he had to contend against his own countrymen. The attractions of fur trading were too great for the merchants to induce them to settle down and develop the country around them, and they were unwilling to fulfil their promises or to act in accordance with the terms of their patents.

During the next twenty years Champlain crossed the ocean eighteen times. Each voyage was made in the interest of the colony, and he sought by every means in his power, by prayers and petitions, to obtain the control of the commerce of the country so as to make it beneficial to all. In spite of his extraordinary exertions and the force of his will, he foresaw the fatal issue of his labours.

The settlers were few in number, bread and provisions were scarce, and the condition of the infant colony was truly deplorable. At this distressing period a British fleet arrived in the harbour of Quebec. What was to be done? The rude fortress of St. Louis could not withstand the assault of an armed fleet, even if it were well defended. But Champlain had no ammunition, and he, therefore, adopted the only course open to him of capitulating and handing over the keys of the fort to the commander, Kirke. Champlain then left Quebec and