

Sieur de Champlain and a dozen or so of armed soldiers, he holding parley with some of the leaders.

"Oh, there is M. Giffard," she cried presently. "And look—are there—women?"

"Squaws. Oh, yes."

"Do they travel, I mean come from the fur country? What a long journey it must be for them."

"They do not mind. They are nomads of the wilderness. You know the Indians never build towns as we do. Some of them settle for months until the hunting gives out, then they are off on a new trail."

"What queer people. One would think the good missionaries would civilize them, teach them to be like—can they civilize them?"

"After centuries, perhaps"—dryly.

"Is all this country theirs?"

"Well"—he lifted his eyebrows in a queer, humorous fashion. "The King of France thinks he has a right to what his explorers discover; the King of England—well, it was Queen Elizabeth, I believe, who laid claim to a portion called Virginia. She died, but the English remain. Their colony is largely recruited from their prisons, I have heard. Then his Spanish majesty has somewhat. It is a great land. But the French set out to save souls and convert the heathen savages into Christian men. They have made friends with some of the tribes. But they are not like the people of Europe, rather they resemble the barbarians of the north. And the Church, you know, has labored to convert them."