

The First Families of Canada.—Continued

IN 1535, Jacques Cartier, with two ships, manned by a hundred and twenty men, who had sailed from St. Malo, in Brittany, explored the cold and sterile shores of Labrador and Newfoundland. Cartier thought that this barren and uninviting country might be taken for the country assigned to Cain; and considered one acre of the Magdalen Islands, which he reached next, as worth the whole of Newfoundland.

As the sailors rowed their boats close in shore, coasting along bays and inlets, they could see the naked savages moving about on the beach, or paddling their bark canoes along the shores; after a time they managed to hold some intercourse with them, by means of signs and gifts of hatchets, knives, beads and toys, often having as many as fifty canoes about them. The Indians were delighted to exchange their fish for the knives and hatchets which they coveted so much, and a red cap for their chief sent them away happy.

Cartier sailed east and northward along the coast of Gaspé Bay. Here on its rocky headland he landed and set up a large wooden cross, thirty feet high, carved with three *fleurs-de-lis*, and bearing the inscription in French, "Long live the King of France." By this means he formally took possession of the land for his sovereign Francis I. In order to impress the savages the more, the French knelt around the cross, and made signs by pointing to the sky, to show that it was connected with the salvation of man. The chief showed them, by expressive signs, that he did not like their setting up the cross on his territory without his permission. Cartier easily persuaded him that the cross had