

some account of the early French settlements, I may omit all mention of the later incidents in the history of the colony; of the fluctuating periods of prosperity and of suffering; and of the events which, from the neglect of the Home Government and the growing power of the English colonies, finally led to its conquest.

Two reflections must suggest themselves to any one who carefully studies these early annals of our country. There are few such opportunities of tracing from contemporary authorities the extraordinary mutability to which uncivilized tribes are subject. When Cartier entered the St. Lawrence he found permanent villages at Quebec and Montreal; but 60 years later, in Champlain's time, there were only a few scattered Montagnais about Quebec, and no Indian villages within many leagues of Montreal. Who the Indians were that Cartier met with it is not easy to determine; but there can be no doubt, from the fragments of their language preserved by him, as well as from their habits of life, living in walled villages, that they belonged to some branch of the great Iroquois stock. The traditions of the Indians themselves, as handed down to us by subsequent writers, leave the point doubtful. The Algonquins said that they had been driven from Montreal by the Hurons. The Iroquois, according both to Cadwallader Colden, their special historian, and to Perrot, represent themselves to have been the original holders of that important post. One thing, however, is certain, that when we first become clearly acquainted with them, the two great sections of the Indian race were as distinctly separated in the territory they occupied as in their language and customs. That section which we may call Algonquins or Chippeways, though divided into different tribes, occupied the coasts of New England, Nova Scotia, and the Gulf of St. Lawrence. We find them on the north shore of the Lower St. Lawrence, on the head-waters of the streams running into the Ottawa, and