

The bold fishermen of Normandy, Bretagne, and the Basque country had, from a very early period, frequented the fisheries of Newfoundland, and some of the more adventurous had now and then visited the coasts of Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, previous to the seventeenth century.\* All attempts however, to settle Canada and Acadia before the sailing of De Monts' expedition, had proved entirely abortive.

When the king and his able minister, Sully, had been once won over to the project, they willingly consented to give De Monts and his associates an entire monopoly of the fur-trade throughout the wide domain of which he was to be the Viceroy. The expedition was chiefly supported by the merchants of the Protestant town of La Rochelle, and was regarded with much jealousy by St. Malo and Dieppe, and other commercial cities. Nor did devout Catholics look very favorably upon an enterprise whose leader was a professor of the hated Calvinistic creed, and whose charter expressly declared that the Protestant adventurers should enjoy, in the new colony, all the privileges they possessed in France. The Catholics were, however, propitiated by the stipulation that the Huguenots should take no part in the work of converting the natives, which would be reserved especially for the priests who accompanied the expedition. In those days religious feeling was carried to extremes. The king had long been the champion of the French Protestants, and though he had been persuaded at last to recant and profess the Roman Catholic faith, yet there was always a latent distrust of his sincerity among those who were the most ardent supporters of the predominant religion. It is not, therefore, surprising that the movement of the Hugue-

nots to found a new empire on the American Continent should have been watched with suspicion by those who had the interests of the Catholic church chiefly at heart. As we shall soon see, religious difficulties arose to mar the success of the early Acadian colonists.

After a great deal of trouble and expense, De Monts succeeded in getting together the number of men required at that stage of his enterprise. Some had served their time in the prisons and galleys of France, others were Catholic priests and Protestant ministers, others were volunteers of noble birth. Among the latter class was Jean de Bien-court, better known in the history of the times of which we are writing as Baron de Poutrincourt. Like the majority of the nobility, he was a soldier, and had distinguished himself throughout the wars which had ended in placing King Henry IV on the throne of France. His family belonged to the maritime province of Picardie, and was possessed of considerable landed estates. A brave soldier, a man of great energy, and conciliatory manners, he was well-fitted to assist in the establishment of a new colony.

Another distinguished associate of De Monts was Samuel Champlain, whose history is so replete with interest to the people of the New Dominion of Canada. He, in later times, was to make himself a famous name in New France; for he it was who founded the noble old city on the crest of that lofty promontory, which overlooks the St. Lawrence, and forms, with the surrounding landscape, one of the finest panoramas to be seen throughout America.

De Monts and his associates reached without accident the low fir-covered shore of Nova Scotia, visited several of its harbors and bays, and finally sailed into the Bay of Fundy, which was then called La Baie Française, and explored its shores. At St. Mary's Bay, a priest of the name of Aubrey went ashore and lost himself in the woods,—an incident which led to much wrangling and dispute; for the Catholics charged the Huguenots with having made

\* L'Escarbot mentions an old fisherman at Conseau, in 1607, who had been visiting those seas for 42 successive years. When De Monts entered the present harbor of Liverpool, he met a fur-trader by the name of Rossigoul. Many other facts might be mentioned to show that the French were frequent visitors to the coast of Nova Scotia, previous to the expedition of 1604. La Roche's expedition, which never went beyond Sable Island, was in 1598.