

by Pontgravé, had turned his attention once more to the St. Lawrence and to what was to be the great work of his life.

In 1608, therefore, the determined colonizer and the vigorous trader started together up the great and silent river and reached again the spot where Stadacona had once stood. Upon the deserted site and under the shelter of the beetling rock upon which his future fortress was to be established, Champlain laid the foundations of Quebec. It was but a village, square in shape, with wooden buildings, and surrounded by a wooden wall and ditch, fortified by bastions and guns. But it was enough for the moment and to the man who had the instinct of empire and government in his breast. Before very long he detected and suppressed with severe punishments a plot on the part of the fur-traders to do away with his stern but wholesome rule and to make trade the entire aim, instead of the subsidiary condition, of the settlement. The chief conspirator was promptly hung and others were sent to France in chains, or condemned to the galleys.

AN EVENT OF LASTING CONSEQUENCES

During the following year occurred an event which had lasting consequences and was the nominal cause of the prolonged and bloody conflict between Iroquois and French. Its importance has probably been exaggerated as the feud was inevitable in any case. The Iroquois would have brooked no rival to their savage empire had Champlain never given any assistance to the Hurons whom they had long intended to crush and did eventually crush. Moreover, they were quick as the wolves which roamed the wilderness in countless numbers, to detect the presence of danger, and, no doubt, had already heard traditions and plentiful rumours of the conduct of Cartier and other explorers in deceiving and seizing friendly natives—perhaps members of wandering bands with which they may have been on friendly terms. Be that as it may, however, Champlain did certainly precipitate the issue when, in the early summer of 1609, he