

settlements in Brazil and Florida, seem to have diverted their attention from New France, but they never quite forgot it, nor utterly relinquished the hope of one day founding a State on the St. Lawrence. Merchants from Dieppe and St. Malo continued to visit its shores, and from time to time, slight, ineffectual attempts at settlement were made. It was not, however, until 1608, that an expedition of any importance was organized. Monsieur des Monts, a Calvinist of wealth and rank, then received from Henry IV. the authority necessary for the purpose, and as an indemnity for consequent expenses, he also obtained the monopoly of the fur trade for one year. A company of merchants was immediately formed, and the command of the expedition given to the illustrious Samuel Champlain. Quebec, the Stadacona of Cartier, was decided on as the most advantageous site for the projected settlement, the destined cradle of the Canadian nation. There accordingly, Champlain unfurled the white banner on the 3rd of July, 1608. In the Algonquin tongue, "Kebec" signifies a strait, the St. Lawrence flowing at this point in a narrow channel between two high banks. The intended capital\* of Canada could not have been more judiciously located. It possesses a magnificent harbour, navigable for the largest vessels, and capable of containing the most numerous fleet. The great river at its base forms a commodious highway of communication with the very heart of the continent, while in consequence of

\* Quebec is now considered the military capital of Canada, Montreal ranking as the commercial metropolis, and Ottawa as the legislative.