

CHAMPLAIN AND HIS ASSOCIATES.

CHAPTER I.

1488—1543.

EARLY FRENCH ADVENTURE IN NORTH AMERICA.

Traditions of French Discovery.—Normans, Bretons, Basques.—Legends and Superstitions.—Verrazzano.—Jacques Cartier.—Quebec.—Hoche-laga.—Winter Miseries.—Roberval.

LONG before the ice-crusts of Plymouth had listened to the rugged psalmody of the Puritan, the solitudes of Western New York and the shadowy wilderness of Lake Huron were trodden by the iron heel of the soldier and the sandaled foot of the Franciscan friar. France was the true pioneer of the Great West. 'They who bore the fleur-de-lis' were always in the van, patient, daring, indomitable. And foremost on this bright roll of forest-chivalry stands the half-forgotten name of Samuel de Champlain.

Samuel de Champlain has been fitly called the Father of New France. In him were embodied her religious zeal and romantic spirit of adventure. Before the close of his career, purged of heresy, she took the posture which she held to the day of her death,—in one hand the crucifix, in the other the sword.

¹ *Fleur-de-lis*—flower of the lily. The royal insignia of France.