

# WAS CHAMPLAIN A PROTESTANT?

'TIME UNVEILS ALL TRUTH.'



WE were startled to read recently in the pages of a work entitled a "History of Canada," the following sentence concerning Champlain: "His name, household word as it is, is not held in affectionate regard as an article of French Canadian Faith." For we had always been taught, we had read, and had heard from even French Canadians themselves, that Champlain was the hero of Frenchmen in Canada. But the further perusal of the book before us did not require the turning of many leaves before the author's object in making such a statement beamed upon us with more than mid-day clearness. Might not the fact of Champlain's name being held in reverence among French Canadians, the great majority of whom are Roman Catholics, be the occasion of a presentiment in favor of his Catholicity? Therefore, by all means, let the historian who would prove Champlain a Protestant, do away with this obstacle to a clear course upon which to start. Such apparently was the scheme of Mr. Kingsford, who is the author of the quoted words; for the way must necessarily have been clear before he could come upon us with the still more startling assertion: "All evidence points to the certainty that Champlain was a Protestant."

It may be said that Mr. Kingsford is not the only historian who claims that Champlain was a Protestant. We admit that a few others have expressed a *doubt* as to his religion. For instance L'Abbe Faillon, in the words of Windsor, "is not without a suspicion that the forename Samuel, uncommon among Catholics and usual with Protestants, may indicate that Champlain was born in a Huguenot household." But on the other hand we claim that none amongst them have dared

to state conclusively that he belonged to the Protestant party. For in the face of the testimony of contemporary writers and the facts of Champlain's own life, any arguments intended to prove him otherwise than Catholic, dwindled into insignificance. Mr. Kingsford, however, seems to disregard the general testimony, and with a few notions gleaned from one or two indeterminate historians as basis, he brings his own ingenuity to bear upon these, and attempts to put a new face on matters connected with Champlain's religion. His arguments we do not consider conclusive; as in the first place, not agreeing with the testimony of history, and as attempting to prove something, the truth of which is contradicted by many assertions made throughout his narrative.

Mr. Kingsford's first argument is that of L'Abbé Faillon quoted above, relative to the name Samuel. But there is a vast difference in the manner of expression used by the two men. Note that while the Abbé says the name Samuel was *uncommon* amongst Catholics, Mr. Kingsford says that "Samuel was a name *never* given to Roman Catholics." But perhaps as years move us farther from a thing that was of uncommon occurrence, the latter may at length become enshrouded in such a mist as would warrant us in saying it never did occur. But as to the name Samuel, we have neither time nor desire to examine the hoary manuscripts of centuries ago in search of a name which has nothing so diabolical about it as to call for the condemnation of the church. Though, we daresay, that a glance over Catholic names of bygone days would reveal here and there a Samuel, just as to-day men of the same name may be found in Catholic ranks. We know a case where a French Catholic parent called a son Samuel, through reverence for that name in the great Champlain.

In the same paragraph we read: "The strict observance in France of the correct-