

refusal given by the Company to an application presented to it by the first Missionaries, who arrived in the country, to be permitted to form a regular establishment at Montreal—the importance of which had been felt at first sight. It consequently fell to the lot of a few private individuals, more remarkable for their piety and religious zeal than their riches, to undertake and accomplish a design so advantageous to the improvement of Canada. The first resolution of these intrepid Christians was to erect on the island a French hamlet, so well fortified as to be enabled effectually to resist any attack that might be meditated by the natives. The poor were not to be disregarded, but were to be put in such a way as to be able to gain a livelihood from their own industry. It was also proposed to permit the whole island to be occupied by Indians of whatever tribe or nation, provided they should become professors of Christianity, or showed the least willingness to be instructed in the tenets of that religion. It was even designed to civilize these lords of the wood, and to bring them to a sense of the necessity of living by the industry of more peaceful and domestic habits than they had been accustomed to follow. The number of individuals who had formed themselves into this laudable association was thirty-five—a number, perhaps, too great to act with unanimity, for any length of time, in an affair intricate and difficult of attainment. But nothing is too difficult for the resolute in heart; and the first steps which were taken gave strong symptoms of future success. In virtue of the concession which was made by his Majesty of the Island of Montreal in favour of this association, formal possession was taken of it in 1640, at the conclusion of a grand mass which was celebrated on the occasion in a tent. During the following year, Paul de Chomedey, Sieur de Maisonneuve, a native of Champagne and a member of the association, brought several families from France to Canada; among whom was an unmarried lady of condition named Manse, who was destined to have the care of the religious persons of her own sex at Montreal. The new emigrants were conducted to that place by the Chevalier de Montmagny, and the Superior General of the Jesuits; and on the 15th of October, M. de Maisonneuve was chosen Governor of the Island. On the 17th of May, 1642, the situation destined for the French settlement was consecrated by the same Superior, who celebrated the holy mysteries. He also dedicated to the “Mother of God” a small chapel that had been hastily erected, and deposited therein the “blessed sacrament.” This ceremony had been preceded by another three months before. All the members of the association having assembled on a Thursday morning in the church of *Notre Dame de Paris*, such as were in orders celebrated the “holy sacrifice”—the others communicating at the altar of the Virgin Mary, and all then joining in supplications to the “Queen of Angels,” entreating her to take the Island of Montreal under her especial protection. At length, on the 15th of August, the Assumption of the “Mother of God” was solemnized in the island by an immense concourse of both French and Indians. We are told that nothing was omitted on this occasion to draw down the blessings of Heaven upon so useful an establishment, and to give the savages as high an opinion as possible of the Christian Religion.* Thus was the foundation of Montreal laid amidst the prayers and

* See Charlevoix's History of Canada.