

America was now more than ever before, fixing the attention of Europeans : Spain and Portugal had appropriated much of her territory ; England and Holland were in the field, and France could no longer remain a spectator while her enemies and rivals were actively at work in the New World.

A trading society was formed of men of rank and leading merchants, and an expedition fitted out for the purposes of trade and colonization combined ; the command of which was given to Captain Samuel Champlain, a naval officer who had seen service and was in good repute at Court.

He set sail in 1603, and on arriving in Canadian waters, ascended the St. Lawrence as far as the Sault St. Louis (Lachine rapids). On his return he gave an account of his adventures, with a chart of his voyage which so pleased His Majesty that he promised him patronage and encouragement. A new expedition was planned under the superintendence of the Sieur de Monts, comprising a mixed number of catholics and protestants, gentlemen volunteers, soldiers, and skilled artisans. They sailed from Havre de Grâce in March, 1604, bound for Acadia (Nova Scotia), which M. de Monts preferred on account of its milder climate.

Acadia was at that time the chief place of resort for French traffic, and was considered the finest section of French America. It certainly had good ports, a temperate climate, and in parts, a fertile soil. The coasts were frequented by different species of marine animals,