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GENTLEMEN ADVENTURERS IN ACADIA.

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III.—JEAN VINCENT DE ST. CASTINE.

The first chapters of the history of the Provinces now comprised within the New Dominion of Canada, contain many features of dramatic interest. The men who crossed the Atlantic, centuries ago, and laid the foundations of Empires on this continent, possessed all those qualities of manly fortitude and indomitable perseverance, which alone could have enabled them to make a footing in the New World. Some were religious enthusiasts, others sought relief from personal cares and misfortunes; many were soldiers who loved adventure and sought it wherever it could be found. The days of chivalry had long passed away when the pioneers of American civilization braved the perils of the sea and forest. Knights no longer broke lances in tilts and tourneys, or mustered to fight the Paynim in the Holy Land. But, though the times had become more practical, the opportunities for men of brave hearts and resolute courage to win for themselves fame and fortune had never before been so great. The discovery of the Western continent opened up a boundless field of exertion to the adventurer whose talents and energies were cramped in the comparatively narrow arena of Europe. In Mexico and Peru, the Spaniard could fight his way to rank and wealth; and it mattered little to him if the poor natives were crushed relentlessly beneath his iron heel, as long as he satisfied the ambition with which he burned.

The achievements of the French and English pioneers in the North, may not afford as dazzling a theme for the pen of the poet or the historian as those achievements in the South, which have been recorded in the matchless prose of Prescott, and the glowing verse of Southey; and yet the history of their lives is an epic of world-wide interest. If we could but follow them in their career step by step, gauge their thoughts, see their self-denial, their patience, their energy, their perseverance, we would recognize in them the heroes the world most wants. But it is from the results of their work especially, that we can best estimate the value of the debt that the world owes them. Champlain and his compatriots toiling to build their little town by the side of the St. Lawrence, bearing its wealth of waters to the great ocean far beyond, and designed by Nature as the great highway of nations; the Puritans struggling with the difficulties of a rigorous climate and a sterile soil, within sight of the ever restless Atlantic, were performing a work, the grandest in its results the world has ever seen.

As we look down the vista of the past, a few figures stand out prominently in view. We see the soldier, ever prompt to obey the call of duty, or to yield himself up to the seductions and pleasures of the moment. Then comes the black-robed priest, ever zealous in behalf of his religion and his