

### 32 THE HABITANT, HIS ORIGIN AND HISTORY

According to the *Relations des Jésuites* these first Canadians could be likened to the community of Christians in the early church days. A most fraternal sentiment pervaded all the settlements. Help was gladly given to the sick and to captives, and during the enforced absence or disability of some colonists their farms were taken care of by friendly neighbours.

During the first period of colonial life every colonist was carefully selected. Religious persons investigated the conduct of emigrants before they departed for Quebec, and if a black sheep escaped the moral ordeal, and made his way to Canada, he was sent back to France as soon as his character was discovered.

Boucher<sup>1</sup> states that bad men were too much in the light to escape detection. Colonists had to be virtuous—such was the prevailing idea among the patrons of New France, and from this stern prescription they did not swerve under any circumstances. A nobleman was ordered back to La Rochelle for being too attentive to a squaw. When the time arrived to import girls to Canada to provide the settlers with wives, a most rigid attention was paid to their choice. Two women of bad repute were returned as 'undesirables' almost as soon as they landed at Quebec. One Courville, a *roturier*, was warned to put an end to his attentions to Mademoiselle d'Auteuil, and upon his refusal to comply with this advice was confined in gaol, pending his deportation to France.

Such is the picture of Canadian society drawn by the Jesuits in their letters to their superior at Rome. The material side of life was not overlooked in these *Relations*. Father le Jeune endeavoured in several of them to dispel all the false notions scattered broadcast in France with regard to the colony. Almost every letter from the Jesuits was printed and circulated in the French provinces. The enthusiastic description of Canada given in them attracted many immigrants to Quebec and Montreal, and did more to promote colonization than either the efforts of the government or of the One Hundred Associates.

<sup>1</sup> Governor of Three Rivers and author of *L'Histoire véritable et naturelle des mœurs et productions du pays de la Nouvelle-France*, 1664.