

ment of the period during which occurred the events we are about to relate. Behind these adventurous settlers was the illimitable forest, with its hordes of wild Indians; before them was a wide waste of waters, only whitened at distant intervals of time by the sails of some fisherman, trader, or bold adventurer. As we glance back to those times, we see that the elements of very many years of strife on this continent were being formed in the foundation of colonies composed of two antagonistic races. But we can also see in the little settlements scattered over this continent, the germs of future empires:—

"The rudiments of empire here
Are plastic, still, and warm;
The chaos of a mighty world
Is rounding into form."

Whilst the elder La Tour was absent in France pleading his son's cause, the attention of the English was being directed to the fact that the French were attempting to establish themselves in the New World. Sir William Alexander, afterwards the Earl of Stirling, had received from James I. a grant of Acadia, which he proposed to colonize, and named Nova Scotia. When Charles I. ascended the throne he renewed the grant, and also created an order of 150 men who were to be called Baronets of Nova Scotia, provided they contributed to the aid of the settlement of the country. Sir William Alexander, however, does not appear to have succeeded in making any settlement in Nova Scotia, or to have taken any decided steps to drive out the French from the country, until about the time Claude de la Tour was engaged in obtaining assistance for his son.

Claude de la Tour arrived at an opportune time in France, and met with an amount of success that he could hardly have anticipated when he left the shores of Acadia. Cardinal Richelieu had commenced to take considerable interest in the colonization of America, and a company had been formed, with the title of the "Company of New France." The eminent statesman was himself the head of the com-

pany, which comprised a hundred associates, among whom were many men of rank and great wealth. When we read their patent, we cannot but wonder at the audacity with which the European Princes of those days could divide a whole continent among their subjects; but they were to find that "*l'homme propose et Dieu dispose.*" New France was declared to extend from Florida to the Arctic Circle, and from Newfoundland to the headwaters of the St. Lawrence and its tributaries. The company received a perpetual monopoly of the fur-trade, and certain other commercial privileges which were to last for fifteen years. The trade of the colony was declared free, for the same period, from all duties. The company bought a number of ships, and the king himself, to give additional proof of his interest in the enterprise, presented them with two men-of-war, fully equipped. In return for the concessions they received, they were bound to send out a specified number of artisans and other emigrants in the course of several years. The very terms of the agreement showed the bigotry of the age, for the colonists had to be all of the Roman Catholic religion. In the month of April, 1628, four armed vessels and a number of transports, containing emigrants and supplies for the relief of Quebec and Port Royal, sailed from the port of Dieppe, and among the passengers was Claude de la Tour, no doubt elated at the success that had so far attended his mission.

But an adverse fate seemed to dog the footsteps of the men who were laboring to establish a French colony in Acadia. About the same time that the French fleet left Dieppe, the English were preparing for an attack on the settlements of France in the New World. The citizens of Rochelle had defied the king, the Huguenots were everywhere in arms, and Richelieu was resolved on crushing them. When Charles of England declared himself on the side of the French Protestants, many of the Calvinists took arms in his service, and among the number was David Kirk or Kertk, a native of Dieppe, who had been expelled from