

# THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC.

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### HISTORICAL SKETCH.

The Province of Quebec was the cradle of French colonization in America. After the discovery of Canada by Jacques Cartier in 1534 and the unsuccessful attempts of Roberval and the Marquis de la Roche to effect settlements in America, the French founded the colony of Port-Royal, which, for various reasons, developed but slightly. Champlain, who was at first employed by de Monts at Port-Royal, abandoned that enterprise to devote his energies to the establishment of Quebec, the centre of the great colonizing movement out of which sprang New France. At the close of the XVIIth century, the French possessions in America extended to the Gulf of Mexico and embraced the finest and richest portion of the new continent, that is to say, the whole of Canada and more than two-thirds of the present territory of the United States.

The colony founded by Champlain in 1608 has passed through many vicissitudes. Exploited by monopolists and decimated by almost continual wars with the Indians or the New England colonies, its population were called upon to display unusual energy and valor to maintain down to 1759 the honor of the French flag in America.

### *Administrative System.*

Down to 1663, New France was under the almost exclusive control of the trading companies, to whom it was handed over by the king. The Governor devoted himself especially to military matters, so that the internal administration was carried on chiefly by the officers named by the companies, and, from 1647, by a council in which the inhabitants of the country had a certain number of representatives. In 1663, Louis XIV resumed the control of affairs and of the government of the colony, to which he granted a constitution. The Sovereign Council was charged with the administration of justice and constituted a court of last resort, and shortly afterwards the *prevôté* of Quebec and the royal jurisdictions of Three Rivers and Montreal, in addition to the seigniorial courts,