

ment. Within seven years of the discovery of the continent, the fisheries of Newfoundland (as I shall show at a greater length hereafter), were frequented by the hardy mariners of Bretagne and Normandy. Verazzani, a Florentine, sought a western voyage to Cathay, under the auspices of Francis I, but although he did not succeed any more than others in achieving the object of his ambition, he visited many parts of North America. Then came Jacques Cartier, of St. Malo,—that ancient town, thrust out like a buttress into the sea,—the stroughold of privateers, the home of an indomitable and independent race. In the year 1535, did this adventurous sailor set out from the rude old seaport, and finally succeeded in discovering the noble Bay and River, which he named in honour of the Saint. The most admirable description of that ever memorable voyage will be found in one of that series of volumes which Parkman has written concerning the early history of this continent—volumes well worthy the careful perusal of every one, on account of their graphic and spirited style of narrative, so very different from the dreary, dry style in which British American writers have hitherto treated similar subjects. Parkman, who is not merely remarkable for his historical accuracy, but for his truthful descriptions of scenery, tells us how Cartier sailed up the river which carries to the ocean the tribute of the great lakes and rivers of the west.* They passed the gorge of the gloomy Saguenay, “with its towering cliffs and sullen depth of waters.” They anchored off that mighty promontory “so rich in historic memories,” and whence the eye can range over one of the finest panoramic views on this continent. Then they passed up the river, whose banks were covered with luxuriant vegetation, and reached the site of the ancient Hochelaga, where a most picturesque spectacle was presented to their gaze. “Where now,” says the American historian, “are seen the quays and storehouses of Montreal, a thousand Indians thronged the shore, wild with delight, dancing, singing, crowding about the strangers, and showering into the boats their gifts of fish and maize; and as it grew dark, fires lighted up the night, while, far and near, the French could see the excited savages leaping and rejoicing by the blaze.” Cartier ascended the height which he called Mount Royal in honour of the king of France, but how different was the landscape from that which is now the delight of travellers.* “Tower and dome and spire, corrugated roofs, white sail and gliding steamer, animate its vast expanse with varied life. Cartier saw a different scene. East, west and south, the mantling forest was over all, and the broad blue ribbon of the great river glistened amid a realm of verdure. Beyond, to the bounds of Mexico, stretched a leafy desert, and the vast hive of industry, the mighty battle ground of late centuries lay sunk in savage torpor, wrapped in illimitable woods.”

The voyage of Cartier to Canada was the commencement of French commercial and maritime enterprise in North America; but some years elapsed before any permanent settlement was made in the

*Parkman—Pioneers of France in the New World.