

## 22 THE HABITANT, HIS ORIGIN AND HISTORY

find his *Abitation* and other houses and stores a mass of ruins. Most of the settlers, priests and officers of the company had been deported to France. A few friends of Champlain had, however, remained in Quebec, in spite of the change of régime. They were landowners anxious to secure to themselves the fields brought under cultivation after strenuous efforts. Such were Hébert, Couillard, Martin, Desportes, Pivert, Duchesne (a surgeon), Pont-Gravé, and several interpreters, three of whom, among them Brulé, had decided to cast in their lot with the victors. They begged for forgiveness, and the governor of New France, as kindly inclined as he was great, took them back into his service.

In the fall of 1635 Champlain's health suddenly broke down under the terrible strain to which he had been subjected since his youth. War, many voyages across the ocean,—which in those days meant months of anxiety and sufferings—and explorations far and wide, had worn out his robust constitution, and on December 25, 1635, he passed away in his fifty-eighth year. His simple honesty of purpose and sincerity gained for France the friendship and alliance of many Indian tribes in Canada, and it was Champlain's policy with regard to the aborigines that prevailed during the French régime. Posterity both in North America and in Europe has bowed before his noble figure. It is astonishing, says a French historian, that Voltaire, who professed much admiration for William Penn, has not bestowed a single word of praise on Champlain, a man of vaster mind in every way than the Quaker apostle.

The first attempt to colonize New France had resulted in a discouraging failure, due to events over which Champlain had no control. Shortly after his death the population of New France amounted only to eighty-five souls—twenty-three settlers or habitants, eleven interpreters, fourteen clerks connected with the company, ten priests, seven traders and twenty trappers. Still, Champlain's initial step in colonization constituted a sort of foothold for France in America. But for his perseverance New France would probably have been abandoned. His efforts, though thwarted by men and events, have won for him the title of Father of New France.