

or, rather, succeeded by a hollow truce, than the tide of discovery, which had been pent-up, spread over the whole continent, and in a very few years extended to the North Sea, the Gulf of Mexico, and to the Rocky Mountains. Much of this difference must, no doubt, be ascribed to the facilities afforded by our immense chain of lakes and rivers; and much to the missionary spirit of the Recollets and Jesuits, who penetrated, spite of dangers and privations, to every tribe where there was a chance of propagating the faith. Something, too, may be due to the ambition of the Government at home, which was latterly constantly prompting its Governors to the acquisition of new territory, whilst the British were left very much to themselves. But the difference must mainly be attributed to the national character of the settlers themselves. The Englishman, grave and earnest, settled himself at once on his farm, and devoted any leisure he could spare to framing laws for the government of the society which surrounded him, and in determining the religious disputes which arose amongst them. He was essentially a member of a community, and rarely pushed beyond reach of his neighbours and the vicinity of his church and village council until lack of space compelled the hive to give off a swarm. The Frenchman, on the contrary, with characteristic impetuosity, leaving the cares of State to the Governor and the Intendant, and the questions of religion to his priests, plunged at once into the excitement and adventure, which, in spite of its hardships, gives such an irresistible charm to a half-savage life. We have seen the constant endeavours to check this tendency of the population to wander, and the stringent edicts which prohibited any excursions beyond the limits of settlements. But nature is stronger than laws, and the *coureurs de bois* were to be found everywhere, and often, no doubt, where no record of their adventures has been preserved. Only eight years after Champlain's great expedition, at the time when Quebec could count barely 50 inhabitants, we find Sagard,