

GEORGE W. BROWN



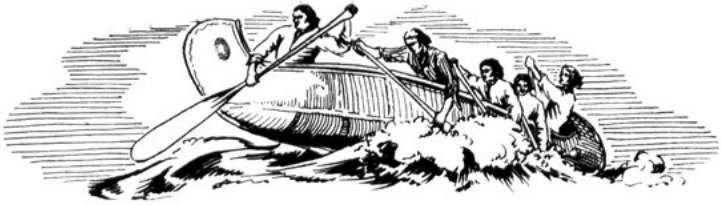
# THE STORY OF CANADA



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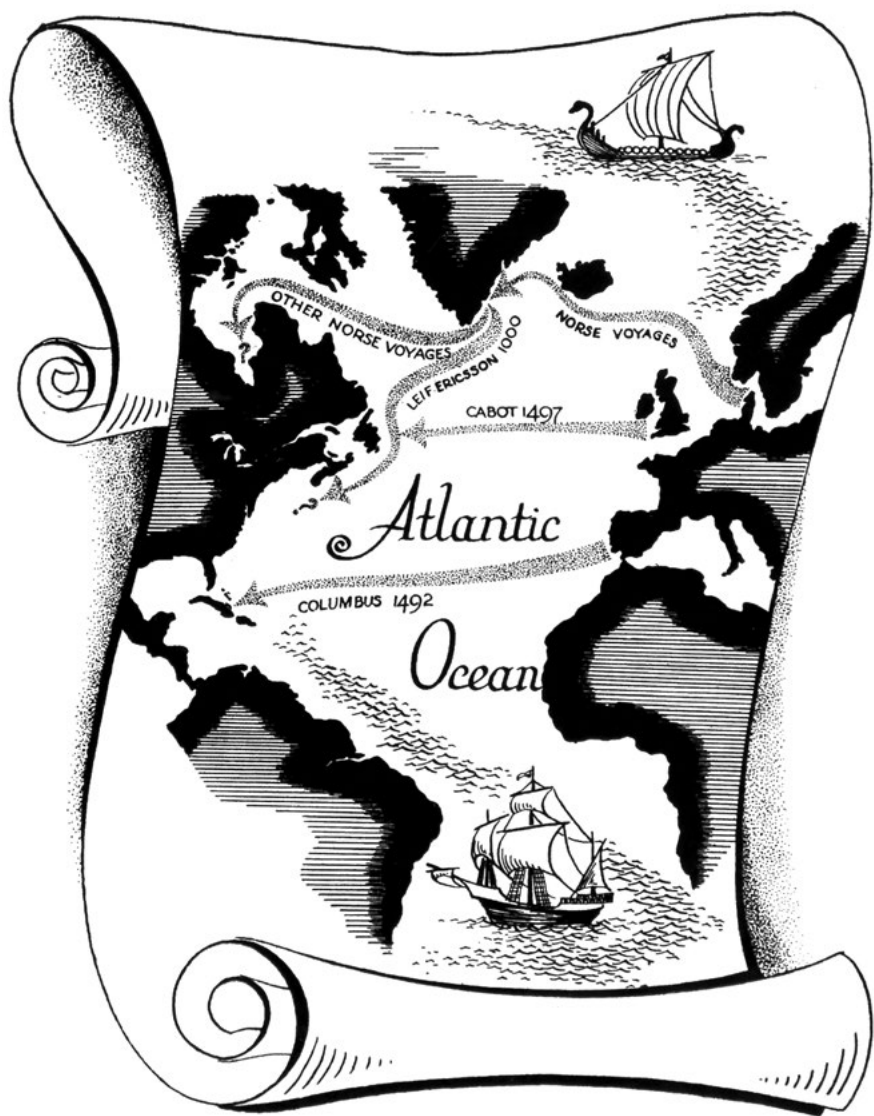
THE story of our young country is a thrilling adventure from beginning to end. Of course, every story can be told in many ways, and there are many kinds of adventure stories in this book. Some are told by those who saw them happen, some are told by the very people to whom they happened. Still others are told as if they were taking place in front of us. Often, we shall read what the Indians or explorers or leaders were saying; we shall be able to “act out” these stories again ourselves.

Although this is a story-history, it cannot tell all the splendid stories of Canada’s past. The authors hope that it will make boys and girls hungry for still more stories, especially those about their home communities. For no part of Canada is without its own stories, although many of these tales have yet to be put into books.

We hope, too, that some boy or girl who reads this book will one day make the stiff climb from Sous-le-Fort to the ramparts and, looking down, see just what Pierre saw in the year 1666. We hope that another will stand with Guy on the citadel above Halifax and pick out the lines of the old town-site below. We hope that still another will revisit Fort Victoria with Governor Douglas or sail downstream with Alexander Mackenzie or hear the cannon roar from Queenston Heights.

If these things can happen, this story is not yet finished.

*The Authors*



## THE WHITE MAN COMES TO CANADA

A thousand years ago, the people of Europe knew very little about the rest of the world. Their wisest geographers would have been amazed by what any boy or girl to-day could teach them about the map of the world. They still believed that the earth was flat. Although their maps showed unexplored lands stretching south and east of Europe, the dangerous waters of the Atlantic Ocean still marked the western boundary of the world they knew.

Yet the shores of North America were visited by white men from Europe at about this time in history—almost a thousand years ago.

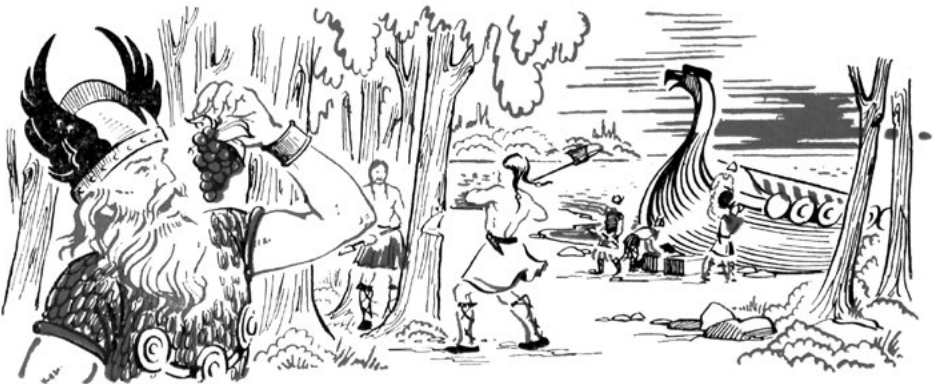
These first newcomers were Norsemen—bold sea-rovers from the coasts of Norway who already had planted colonies in Iceland and Greenland. Their large, open-decked vessels, each driven by a single large sail and rowed by as many as fifty warriors, were the most sea-worthy craft that had yet been invented. The farmers and villagers who lived along the shores of Europe had long before learned to fear the savage Norse landing parties which might sweep in at any moment to lay waste to settlements near the coasts. At last, during one of their early voyages from Iceland to Greenland, some of these hardy Norse seafarers were blown within sight of North America itself. This happened shortly before A.D. 1000.

The Norse colonists in Greenland were excited to hear that one of their ships had found a forest-covered land to the southwest, for there was no timber at all in the cold, bleak land in which they had made their homes. It was not long before they sent further expeditions to explore the strange coasts. We are

told that one party of these Norse explorers came ashore at a place where wild fruit was growing in abundance. They called the new country “Vineland”, and decided that some of their people should be sent to it to build another colony. It is quite likely that they had reached an eastern part of Canada, later to become one of the beautiful Maritime provinces.

The story of the Norse settlements in North America was not written down until many years later, and by that time the homes the Norsemen had built in Canada no longer existed.

For this reason, we cannot be sure exactly where Vineland was, or why the colonies did not last. It is said, however, that many boat-loads of lumber were shipped from Vineland to Greenland, and if this is so, Canada’s export business began a long time ago! If the Norsemen had carried home rich cargoes of gold and silver, or even if they had brought rich loads of furs and fish to the market-places of Europe, we may be sure that the race to explore the New World would have begun right away. They had found a land filled with untold riches; but they did not know this and so the story of the Norsemen did not spread rapidly in Europe. Several more centuries passed before the secrets of the New World began to unfold, and even then they were only learned slowly, one by one.





#### HOW THE CABOTS FOUND THE COD-BANKS

Henry Tudor, King of England, smoothed out the map which Master John Cabot had spread before him. The English admirals crowded closer as His Majesty studied it again. John Cabot had just finished describing an amazing voyage of discovery that he had recently completed in the little ship *Mathew*, and now he stood anxiously waiting to hear what King Henry would say.

The map which so interested the King had been drawn by John Cabot since his return to Bristol. It showed the northern part of the Atlantic Ocean. To be sure, it did not look much like the maps of the North Atlantic which we find in our atlases today. But this was the year 1497, and a vast amount of exploring had still to be done before anyone could draw a true map of the world. To Henry VII and his courtiers, however, the important thing about John Cabot's new map was that it showed lands lying west of England in the Atlantic Ocean—lands that had never been mapped before!

King Henry recognized, of course, the Danish island of Iceland, because his Bristol merchants had been carrying on a brisk trade with its people for many years. It was these merchants of Bristol who had fitted out the little vessel *Mathew* for John Cabot's voyage into the West the spring before. If Cabot's story were true, it seemed that they had risked their money wisely. King Henry had not been so hopeful at that time himself. But now he could not help smiling as he recalled that one-fifth of all profits made by trading with China and Japan were to be paid to the Crown. And John Cabot insisted that it was the land of the Great Khan that he had reached by sailing across the Atlantic Ocean!

"How many days out of Bristol to these parts did you say, Master John?" demanded King Henry, as he pointed to the left-hand edge of the map.

"Fifty days, Your Majesty," replied the master-pilot. "But the voyage, it will be shorter, since we know now where to go." John Cabot did not speak perfect English, for he had been born in Italy and had come to live in England only recently. But he did understand the art of sailing, as he had spent most of his forty years at sea.

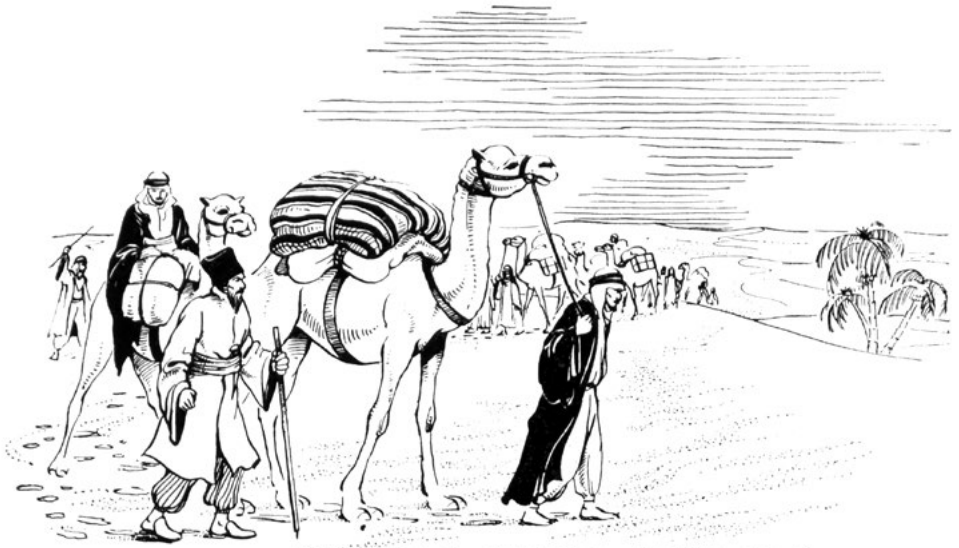
"You met no one at all?" asked the King.

"As I have explained, Your Majesty, we did not carry sufficient provisions to stay longer off the new coasts. If that had been possible, I doubtless should have reached the winter palace of the Great Khan himself, which Marco Polo, the Venetian, saw two hundred years ago."

"Then what saw you of value, if anything?" demanded King Henry. "I care not, Master John, for emptying the royal treasury now to map the lonely coasts you have described."

"—The waters, Your Majesty! Those seas are full of fish, which are not only to be caught in nets, but even in baskets if stones are tied to them first to sink them into the water. We





"AT MECCA I SAW MANY CARAVANS FROM INDIA"

can take so many fish that this kingdom will no longer need to trade with Iceland. The dried fish they call the stock-fish, which we now bring from Iceland, is much like the cod that are so plentiful off the new land."

"We already have greater fisheries off our own coasts, Master John, than can be found anywhere else in the world."

"Until this summer, that was true, Your Majesty. But these waters I have visited were so full of fish that sometimes they slowed the motion of our vessel!"

King Henry frowned, as if to say he did not believe.

"You feel certain, Master John, that by sailing west as you have done, you have reached China itself?" asked King Henry.

"Your Majesty," answered Cabot, "I myself crossed the Holy Land to Arabia many years ago, while trading in the Eastern Mediterranean. At Mecca, the Holy City of the Arabs, I saw many caravans laden with spices, silks, and rich ornaments, arriving from India. I asked many careful questions about where these things were made, and the people of Mecca told me they



did not know. But some of the traders there told me that they came from a great, great distance beyond India itself. When I think how far east I then was from this happy kingdom of yours, Your Majesty, I do not find it hard to believe that those spices and silks had been brought overland more than half way around the world. If they came from China, then China must be much closer to us in the West than in the East. This is why I know that I have reached the shores of Asia on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, Your Majesty.”

“You are sure these are not the lands claimed by Columbus for my Spanish cousin, King Ferdinand?” went on King Henry.

“Fear not, Your Majesty,” replied Cabot. “The shores I have visited this summer have never before been charted. That is why I claimed them in your name. The English flag is certainly the first Christian banner ever to fly over the new land, and I raised it there myself.”

King Henry was satisfied. “How many ships did you say would be needed for your voyage next spring, Master John?” he asked.



“If the merchants this time will let me have six vessels,” replied John Cabot enthusiastically, “they will be weighed down to the water’s edge with the riches of the Orient when I return!”

King Henry’s eyes sparkled, but he paused to think. At last he replied.

“The traders will have to pay for the ships and provisions, of course. But we shall give orders that what you ask must be granted, Master John, and you will have your choice of any vessels lying in our ports.”

#### THE SECOND VOYAGE

For the whole of the winter which followed, John Cabot was the hero of London. Everyone was sure that Asia had been reached and none was more sure than John Cabot himself. People called him “the Great Admiral”, and were quick to believe him when he promised great riches to those who were chosen to go with him the next spring.

Of course, everyone was doomed to disappointment.

Like Columbus five years earlier, John Cabot thought that he had travelled all the way to the Far East by sailing west. Although people were willing to believe that the earth must be round, no one in those days knew how large it really is. If Cabot could have known that he had travelled only one-fifth of the distance to China on his first voyage, he might have guessed that he had discovered an entirely new continent.

Early in May, 1498, the little English fleet set sail from Bristol. This time John Cabot took his son, Sebastian, with him. The merchants, who paid for the expedition, ordered the vessels laden with “cloth, laces, and other trifles” to trade with the people of China.

By midsummer, the vessels were in sight of a rocky, northern coast and their way was blocked by icebergs. Surely this is not the land that Marco Polo visited, thought John Cabot. Turning south, the little fleet skirted the eastern shores of what is now Canada until they were sailing along the Atlantic coast of the present-day United States of America.

We do not know exactly how this second voyage of John Cabot to North America ended, but it is not hard to guess. It is likely that the ships made their way back to England, one by one, their sailors and passengers filled with feelings of bitter disappointment. Perhaps they still believed that they had visited some part of Asia, for the idea that a vast new continent lay across the North Atlantic took root only slowly in the years that followed.

But even if King Henry VII and the merchants of Bristol who paid for these first expeditions believed that John Cabot had failed, we know to-day how important his voyages really were. We cannot be certain of the exact place where Cabot landed, but the flag of England flew over Canadian soil only five years after the discovery of the New World by Columbus.



Although many years passed before Englishmen crossed the Atlantic Ocean to make their homes in the lands that John Cabot had discovered, one part of the story he had told about his travels brought quick results. For the fishermen of England, and of the other countries of western Europe as well, were quite willing to brave the dangers of the Atlantic crossing to cast their nets in the rich waters that Cabot had described. Soon after 1497, the year of John Cabot's first voyage, fishing-fleets were setting out every spring to spend the summer over the great fishing banks that lie off the eastern coast of Nova Scotia, south of Newfoundland.

Until the time of John Cabot, the vast expanse of the North Atlantic had been a barrier that stood between the Old World and the New. Now the mysteries of this once unending ocean had been explained. It was the forest-covered coasts that lay close by the new fishing grounds which now held secrets for further adventurers. Were these the shores of Asia? Were they islands that lay between Europe and Asia? The only way to find out was to begin explorations inland. That was to be the next step.

## JACQUES CARTIER FINDS THE ST. LAWRENCE GATEWAY

Five years before John Cabot's first voyage, Christopher Columbus had startled Europe by proving that strange lands, inhabited by strange peoples, lay at the western edge of the Atlantic Ocean. Although Columbus believed that these lands were part of Asia, John Cabot and the other explorers who followed him to the New World were of course unable to find the land of the Great Khan. However, the adventurers of Spain and Portugal who invaded the lands about the Caribbean quickly realized that riches were to be had there after all. Before long, the South Atlantic sea-lanes flashed white with the sails of Spanish galleons—many of them weighed down with gold and silver taken from the Indians of Mexico and Peru.

Even before John Cabot first crossed the Atlantic, the Spaniards and Portuguese laid claim to the whole of the New World. However, they did not try to extend their empires far beyond the Caribbean lands, which contained such treasures of gold and silver. It was not very long, therefore, until the kings of

other European countries began to say to themselves: "Perhaps the new lands *do* prevent us from sending our merchant fleets straight west to the rich lands of China and Japan. But even if this New World has no silks and spices, it is possible that the Spaniards and Portuguese have not yet seized *all* the wealth of the New World."

Certainly we know what one ruler in Europe had to say—Francis the First, King of France:

"So!" he jeered, "my cousins in



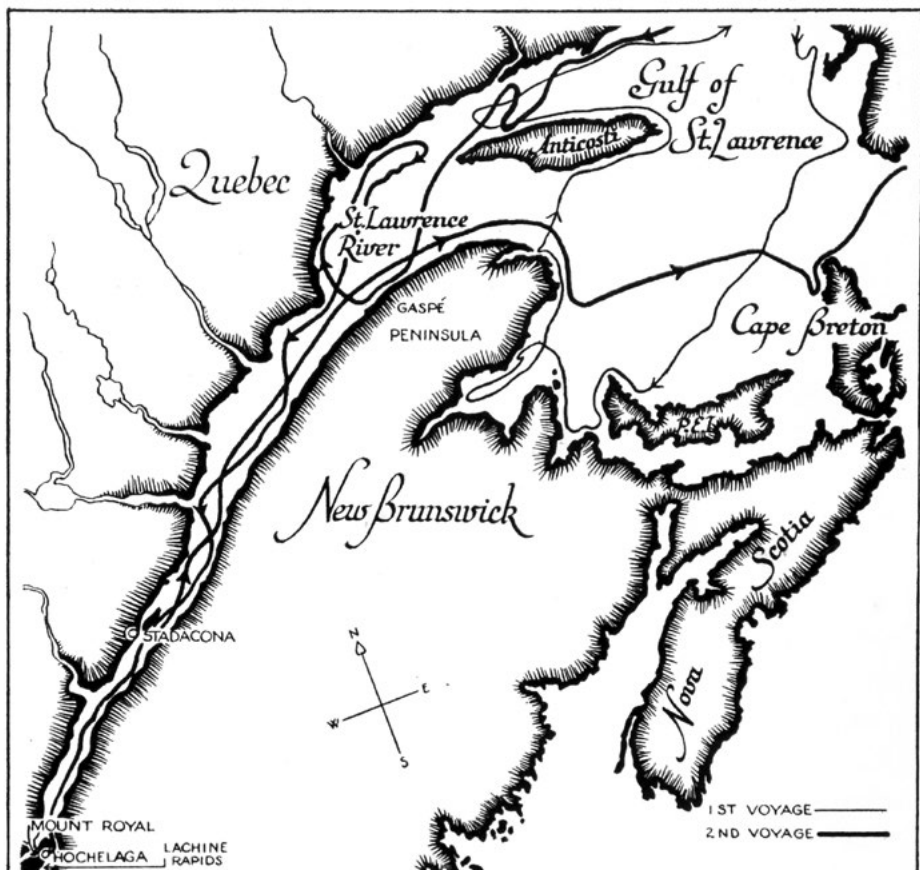




Spain and Portugal are trying to divide the whole New World between themselves! I should very much like to see the clause in our father Adam's will which leaves America to them." King Francis was keenly anxious to learn more about the mysterious lands that lay across the Atlantic.

Early in 1534, therefore, two little French vessels set sail from St. Malo, a seaport on the English Channel. They were under the command of Jacques Cartier, an experienced sea-captain, whose name was to become one of the best-known in Canadian history.

Jacques Cartier's ships were each of about sixty tons—only one-quarter the size of the famous Nova Scotian fishing schooner, Bluenose. However, we do not admire Cartier so much for his daring in crossing the Atlantic; the Atlantic crossing was already being made every year by the fishing fleets from Europe, about which we have already read. And it is even likely that Cartier himself had already visited the coasts of the New World. We



*Cartier's Voyages in 1534 and 1535*

admire Cartier, rather, for the skill and thoroughness he showed in exploring the St. Lawrence waterway, the key to the continent.

On this famous voyage of 1534, Cartier passed through the Strait of Belle Isle, between Newfoundland and Labrador, and explored the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Not until he neared the island of Anticosti, however, did he guess that he might be in the mouth of a great new river flowing out of North America. He did not have time to explore upstream that year, but he did



land on the shore of Gaspé and claim the country in the name of the King of France.

The following year, 1535, Cartier set out again. Although his little fleet of three vessels spent almost seven weeks on the North Atlantic, he reached the Gulf at last and began to sail upstream. It was the first time, so far as we know, that any explorer had ever been on the great St. Lawrence River, as Cartier had named it.

Cartier found an Indian village called Stadacona nestled at the foot of the great rock, where Quebec City now stands. The Indians there did not want him to go farther upstream, but the French explorer was determined to sail as far inland as possible. Almost two hundred miles farther up the St. Lawrence, he reached a large island in the middle of the river. On it he found another Indian village, called Hochelaga.

The Indians of Hochelaga led Cartier to the top of a steep mountain on the island. From it he could see many miles farther up the St. Lawrence. Not far away the river's course was broken by foaming rapids, and Cartier knew that he had sailed as far upstream as he could go. Cartier was a sailor, and he had no desire to explore farther than his ships would carry him. The mountain on which he stood he called Mont Real, or "Mount Royal".

From Hochelaga, Cartier returned downstream to Stadacona to spend the winter. Little did he realize how bitter a Canadian winter could be. Before spring came, many of his men fell sick with scurvy, a disease caused by the lack of fresh fruit and vegetables. "With such infection did this sickness spread in our three ships," wrote Cartier, "that about the middle of February, of a hundred and ten persons that we were, there were not ten well, so that one could not help the other, a most horrible and pitiful case." Many of the men died. Often they were buried only under the snow because the others were too weak to dig graves.



By great good fortune, Cartier learned of an Indian remedy made from tree bark. When it was tried out on the sick men, it worked wonders. "It wrought so well," said Cartier, "that if all the physicians of Montpelier and Louvain had been there with all the drugs of Alexandria, they would not have done as much in one year as that tree did in six days, for it did so happen that as many as used it by the grace of God recovered their health!"

The little band of Frenchmen was glad to set sail again for France the following spring. With them they took many valuable furs that the Indians had traded to them during their stay on the St. Lawrence. Indeed, they took more than furs. Before setting sail, Cartier invited the Indian chiefs aboard his ship. Of those who came, several were not allowed to return to shore. Instead, they were kidnapped and taken to France. Unfortunately, they were never to see Canada again, for they all died in the strange land of the white man.

In 1541, the King of France sent Jacques Cartier to Canada once more. He was to be followed shortly by another French leader, the Sieur de Roberval, who had been told to take colonists to the new country and to build a settlement there.

This time Cartier spent the winter on the St. Lawrence, a little upstream from Stadacona. The Indians were now unfriendly, and when spring arrived with no word from Roberval and his party, Cartier broke camp and set sail down the St. Lawrence for France. Off the coast of Newfoundland, he met the little fleet carrying the colonists under Roberval, who ordered Cartier to accompany them back to the St. Lawrence. Cartier was anxious



to get home, however, and that night under cover of darkness he gave orders to raise the anchor, and set sail back to France.

Roberval continued up the St. Lawrence, and tried to build his settlement where Cartier had spent the winter. But when the snow came, Roberval's colonists began to fall sick with scurvy just as had Cartier's men six years earlier. By spring, over fifty of them had died. Before a second winter could come upon them, Roberval ordered his colonists to the ships, and they all set sail again for France.

To build a settlement in Canada seemed almost impossible; not until almost sixty years had passed did France make another attempt. But Jacques Cartier had already travelled up the great St. Lawrence for over a thousand miles. He had found the route to the heart of the continent. By his feats, Jacques Cartier had well earned the title which history has given him—Discoverer of Canada.