

## CHAPTER I.

I. Discovery of Canada. Division into Upper and Lower Canada.—II. Acadia. Early Political Divisions.—III. Creation of the Dominion.—IV. Representative Institutions and Responsible Government.—V. Principal Events.

1. British North America was discovered by John and Sebastian Cabot, sailing under commission from King Henry VII. of England in 1497, in which year they arrived off the coast either of Labrador or of Cape Breton, authorities differing. In 1517 Sebastian Cabot, the King's "Grand Pilot," discovered Hudson's Bay.

Jean Verrazzano, in 1524, claimed the coast from Nova Scotia to Carolina and all the regions lying beyond as possessions of Francis I. of France, under the name of "New France." The rival claims thus originated were the chief grounds for the long and bloody conflict which, later on, was waged between Great Britain and France for the possession of this continent and for the maritime supremacy that went with it.

Jacques Cartier, of St. Malo, France, landed on July 1st (new style), 1534, at the Port of Brest in Esquimaux Bay, well within the Strait of Belle Isle, there first touching Canadian soil. From that point by devious wanderings along the North Shore, thence to Newfoundland, thence to Anticosti, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick, and thence to Bay des Chaleurs, he pursued his exploratory cruise, which included three of the present provinces of Canada, reaching Gaspé Bay on 24th July (old style), where he planted the cross and took formal possession in the name of his royal master, before sailing for *la belle France* to give report of his adventures to a delighted sovereign and court.

Cartier returned in 1535 and completed the explorations of the previous year by going up the St. Lawrence River through the Saguenay, the Canada and the Hochelaga regions. In the course of this cruise he discovered that the chief town of the central region, where the fresh water began, was called Canada.

Nothing was done either in this, or a subsequent, visit of Cartier in the way of permanent settlement, and the country remained a vast forest, the habitation of savages, till 1608, when, with the advent of Champlain, came the establishment of Quebec as the seat of his Government and the first permanent settlement on the