Indians were given to understand that no trees would be felled and that no fields would be planted. This was good for the Indians, for it left them their hunting-grounds, but it was bad for the French, for it rendered impossible the occupation of farming, the very occupation that was necessary for a healthy and steady growth. Without farming large numbers of people cannot be fed and large communities cannot be built up. All the French settlements were small places. Even Quebec, the oldest and largest town, a hundred years after it was founded was a mere village. After a century of growth the French in America had a population only one fifteenth as large as the population of the English colonies.

71. Marquette and La Salle.—The work begun by Champlain was taken up by others and carried forward with great devotion and perseverance. Foremost among the Frenchmen who took part in building up a new France in America were James Marquette[1] and Robert La Salle.[2] Marquette was a Jesuit priest—a member of the Society of Jesus.

The Champlain statue
at Quebec.

The Jesuits at the time were going into all parts of the world, into Asia and Africa as well as into America, and with great devotion were lifting up the cross and bringing heathen people into the Christian fold. Nowhere was the zeal of the Jesuits greater than it was among the American Indians, and no Jesuit missionary was more zealous than Marquette.

In 1673 this pious man, in company with some fur-traders and guides, ascended the Fox River as far as birch-bark canoes would float, made an easy portage[3] to the Wisconsin River,

[1] Born at Laon, France, in 1637; died near Lake Michigan, in 1675.

[2] Born at Rouen, France, in 1643; was assassinated in Texas in 1687 by some of his followers while endeavoring to found a colony at the mouth of the Mississippi.

[3] A portage is a break in a water route over which goods or boats have to be carried, as from one river to another, or along the banks of a river round a waterfall or rapid.—*Century Dictionary.*