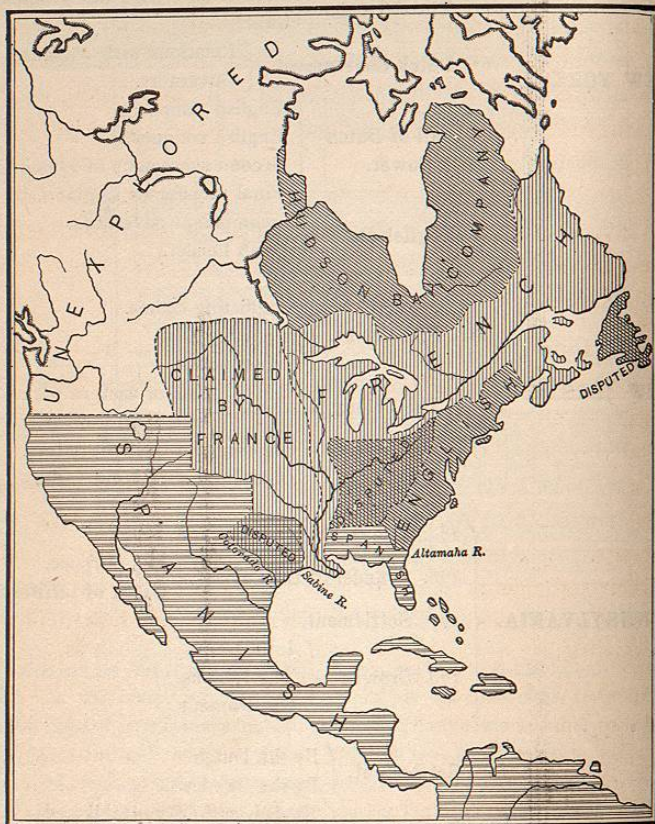


DOWNFALL OF FRENCH POWER IN AMERICA.

185. Cause of the French Wars. — In the latter half of the seventeenth century, the struggle for the control of North Amer-



North America at Beginning of French Wars.

ica had narrowed down to two nations, France and England. It is true that Florida and Mexico were held by Spain; but the Spaniards were so intent upon the gold in the mines of

Mexico and South America, that they made no attempt to extend their settlements. England and France were thus left practically alone in possession of the continent. There were two causes that made a conflict between them inevitable. The two nations were old enemies. From early times, long and bloody wars had been waged between them. A slight pretext was enough to occasion hostilities, and their American colonists were always ready to take up the quarrel. And then, as the growing settlements began to encroach upon each other, local causes of enmity arose. Conflicting claims to territory, relations with the Indians, differences in the religion, occupation, and character of the English and French settlers, combined to cause constant jealousy and to bring about occasional open outbreaks.

186. Limits of English and French Settlement. — When the long struggle began — toward the close of the seventeenth century — all the English colonies except Georgia had been founded. The English had undisputed possession of the Atlantic coast from New England to South Carolina. Although they claimed the Pacific Ocean as their western boundary, yet, in reality, the Alleghany Mountains marked the western limits of their settlements and authority.

The French had built forts and had made scattered settlements in Nova Scotia, along the St. Lawrence and Great Lakes, and down the Mississippi. Their settlements were generally small and far apart. They were most numerous in Acadia (Nova Scotia and the adjacent mainland), Canada, and the lake region.

187. Comparative Strength. — At this period the French colonists numbered hardly more than 12,000. The total population of the English colonies at the same time was estimated at 200,000, — more than sixteen times as many as their French rivals. The French plan of conquering the new country was chiefly by establishing forts and trading-posts, to be held by

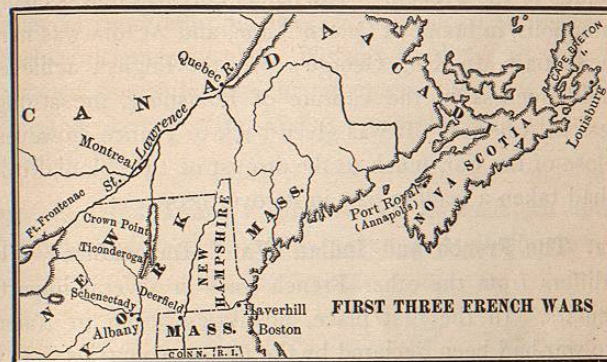
trappers and fur-traders. The English brought over farmers and laboring men who cultivated the soil, and made permanent homes. In wealth, as in numbers, the English colonies far surpassed the French. While the French settlers were dependent on the mother-country for supplies for their armies, the English colonies were themselves able to support the troops for their defense. On the other hand, the French soldiers were among the best in the world. Their colonial governors were generally able and patriotic men. The French, too, by living among the Indians, often intermarrying with them, and adopting their ways and customs, gained such influence over the savage tribes that they could enlist their powerful aid against the English in almost every contest.

188. The Iroquois Indians. — There were some Indians, however, whom the French could not control. The Iroquois, or Five Nations, occupying northern New York, were a group of powerful and semi-civilized tribes. Their united strength numbered 4000 warriors. They had well-built villages, and fields of corn, beans, and pumpkins. Their discipline and government were superior to those of most other savage tribes. The location of these Indians — on the border between the French and English settlements — and their acknowledged power, gave them great importance in the approaching war. For several reasons they disliked the French: (1) Champlain, the great French explorer, had once sided with their enemies, the Algonquins; (2) they looked upon the French as their rivals in trapping and fur-trading; (3) there were better opportunities for profitable trade with the prosperous English than with the French.

189. Period of the French Wars. — Including varying intervals of peace, the contest between the French and the English in America lasted for seventy-four years (1689–1763). This long struggle included four separate wars, all except the last

being named from the reigning sovereign of England. They are (1) King William's War, 1689–97; (2) Queen Anne's War, 1702–13; (3) King George's War, 1744–8; (4) French and Indian war, 1754–63.

190. The First Three French Wars. — When James II. was banished from England by his subjects he took refuge in France. Here he was aided by the French in his effort to regain the throne from William and Mary, who had been crowned king



and queen of England in his stead. This led to a war between France and England, in which their American colonies became involved, and which was known in America as King William's War. Queen Anne's and King George's Wars also originated in Europe. The scene of conflict of these three wars was New York, New England, and the French territory lying northward.¹ Combined forces of French and Indians swooped down upon defenseless villages in New York and Massachusetts and committed dreadful massacres. The colonial troops, with more or less aid from England, made expeditions against

¹ The English colonies south of New York took little part in the first three French wars. During King William's War, however, the colonists of South Carolina were fighting the Spanish and Indians of Florida, and defeated a combined French and Spanish expedition from Cuba. (§ 114.)

Quebec, Port Royal, and Louisburg (the latter a strong fortification on Cape Breton Island).

191. Results of the First Three French Wars. — But little change of territory resulted from these wars. In the first conflict Port Royal was taken by English and colonial troops, but was given back to France at the close of the war. In the second war Port Royal, with Acadia, was again captured. This time the prize was kept by England, and never again fell into the hands of the French.¹ The name, Port Royal, was changed to Annapolis, in honor of Queen Anne, and Acadia was named Nova Scotia.² In King George's War the English achieved a splendid success in the capture of Louisburg, the strongest fortress in America. It was given back to France, however, at the close of the war, much to the disgust of the colonial troops who had taken a leading part in its overthrow.

192. The French and Indian War: Importance. — This war differs from the other French wars in several important particulars. In the first place, hostilities began in America before war had been declared by the mother-countries. It was the first war, also, in which all the English colonies were engaged. It was the bloodiest of the wars, and far the most important in its results.

193. How the War Began. — The English king authorized the governor of Virginia to grant a vast tract of land west of the Alleghanies to the Ohio Company for the purpose of colonization. The French, who already had a few forts in this region, arrested the English immigrants, and established new strongholds in the disputed territory. Major George Washington, then a young man of twenty-one, was sent by the governor

¹ Newfoundland was also by treaty surrendered to England. The island had been occupied by the English since 1583, but fell into French hands during Queen Anne's War.

² Latin for *New Scotland*, to correspond with *New England*.

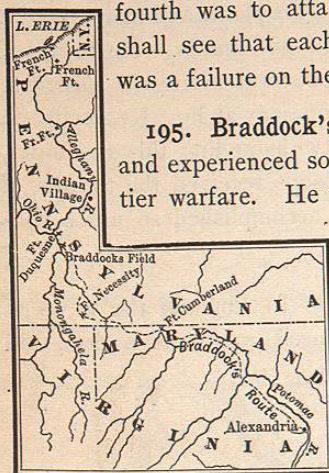
of Virginia to request the French to remove their forts. Washington performed his dangerous mission wisely and courageously, but was unable to induce the French officers to retire. Soon afterward Washington was sent with a company of Virginia troops to the relief of an English post at the head of the Ohio River, then threatened by the French. On his arrival he found that the French had captured the place, and had named it Fort Duquesne, after the governor of Canada. He repulsed the advance guard of the French, but was afterward forced to retire, and to surrender his little company at Fort Necessity (in southwestern Pennsylvania). Notwithstanding this surrender, the young commander and his troops received the thanks of the Virginia Assembly for having accomplished so much with their small force.

194. England Takes a Hand. — In England the news of the surrender of Fort Necessity caused great indignation, and



a plan was at once formed for driving the French from the entire country. General Edward Braddock was sent to America

with about 1000 men. At Alexandria, Va., Braddock was met by the governors of Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, and Massachusetts, and a plan of operations was agreed upon. English troops, reinforced by colonial forces, were to advance and capture Fort Duquesne;¹ another expedition was to take Fort Niagara;¹ a third was to seize Crown Point;¹ a



fourth was to attack the Acadian peninsula.¹ We shall see that each of these plans, except the last, was a failure on the first attempt.

195. Braddock's Defeat. — Braddock was a brave and experienced soldier, but wholly unfitted for frontier warfare. He was used to battles with trained

soldiers on the open plains of Europe. He knew nothing of the methods of fighting savages in pathless woods. He started toward Fort Duquesne with a fine army numbering 2000 men, consisting of regulars from England and provincials from Virginia, Maryland, and New York.

Washington commanded the Virginia troops. Refusing to listen to the advice of the colonial officers, Braddock advanced through the forests, his troops encumbered with useless baggage, and with floating flags and rolling drums, as if no enemy were near. Within a few miles of Fort Duquesne, his army, while passing through a wooded ravine, was suddenly attacked from ambush by a strong force of French and Indians. The British troops were thrown into confusion by the attack from unseen enemies, and fired wildly into the air. The colonial soldiers concealed themselves quickly behind trees, and fought as the savages did. Braddock had four horses shot from under him, Washington, two.

¹ Find these places on the map, and tell how their location gave them importance in the war.

An order to retreat had just been given when Braddock fell mortally wounded. His fall caused a panic, and the retreat became a rout. Washington and his troops alone saved the army from total destruction.

196. Acadia. — In the same year a force of British and colonial troops sailed from Boston, and captured the few remaining French forts in Acadia.¹ The French settlers of this region had steadfastly refused to take the oath of allegiance to England. They were all Roman Catholics, and wholly under the influence of French priests, who were hostile to English rule and loyal to France. England considered these French Acadians a source of perpetual danger to her authority. A cruel order was issued to banish them from their homes and confiscate their property. The plan was heartlessly carried out. About 4000 settlers were taken from their homes — often separated from their families — and scattered in different colonies from Massachusetts to Louisiana. (In the poem "Evangeline," Longfellow touchingly describes the sufferings of some of these unfortunate people.)



Montcalm.

197. War Declared. — France and England declared war in 1756, after it had been raging two years in America. Each side sent over ships and men, and each seemed to realize that this was to be the final struggle for the control of the continent.

¹ This region had been ceded to England at the close of Queen Anne's War, but had not been fully occupied.

198. English Reverses.—The officers first sent over by England were inefficient, and were jealous of the colonial leaders. There was little unity of action between the different English armies. On the other hand, Montcalm, commander-in-chief of the French troops, was one of the ablest generals of his time. His troops were well disciplined, his armies acted in harmony. For two years he successfully resisted the attacks of the English upon his posts in the disputed territory.¹

199. The Tide Turned.—In 1757 William Pitt became the actual head of the British ministry. The force of his genius was soon observed in the changed condition of affairs in



William Pitt.

America. Inefficient officers were removed to give place to able and experienced ones. The unjust preference shown to English regulars over the colonial soldiers was no longer observed, and all troops were placed on equal footing. Energy and unity of action took the place of delays and jealousies.

200. Fall of French Strongholds.—

One by one the great French strongholds fell. Louisburg was surrendered in 1758. An attack on Ticonderoga, under General Abercrombie, was badly defeated, but the next year both Ticonderoga and Crown Point fell into the hands of the English. Fort Frontenac, on the north-east shore of Lake Ontario, was captured, and the French fleet on the lake destroyed. Fort Duquesne, thus cut off from its source of

¹ During this period of French success, their arms met one reverse in the defeat of Dieskau near the south end of Lake George. After their victory the English erected a fort, named Fort William Henry, near the battlefield. Two years later this fort was captured by Montcalm. Many of its helpless defenders were cruelly murdered by the Indian allies of the French, Montcalm being unable to control them.

supplies, was abandoned on the approach of an English army. Washington, who led the advance guard, planted the English flag on the deserted ramparts, and changed the name of the place to Fort Pitt (now Pittsburg), in honor of the great British minister. Niagara was also taken, thus completely cutting off the communication between Canada and Louisiana.

201. The Last Great Battle.—All that now remained to France were a few strongholds along the St. Lawrence and an island at the north end of Lake Champlain. Quebec, the capital of the French province

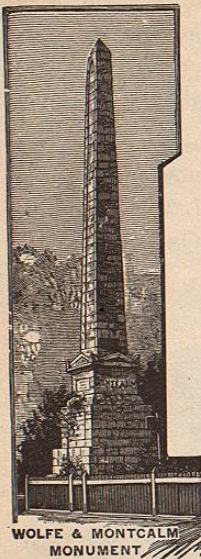
of Canada, was at once the strongest and the most important of these defenses. That part of the town known as the "upper city" is situated on a steep bluff overlooking the St. Lawrence River. General Montcalm, who commanded



Old Quebec.

the defenders, had about 13,000 men. These were strongly posted for a distance of several miles along the north bank of the stream. The English forces under General Wolfe numbered 10,000 men. Wolfe spent four months in the vain effort to draw his skillful antagonist into a fight in the open field, or to surprise some weak place in his defenses. At last the keen eye of the English leader espied with his glass what seemed to be a ravine threading its way down the precipice. Closer observation proved it to be a path. Wolfe resolved to make a last desperate attempt to take the city by way of this perilous ascent. In the dead of night, boatloads of English soldiers floated silently down the stream, landed at the foot of the hidden path, and in single file climbed to the

top. Here, on a lofty plain, called the Heights of Abraham, the few astonished guards were overpowered, and 5000 troops, with Wolfe at their head, ranged themselves in battle line before their enemies were aware of their presence. The French rushed desperately to the attack. Both generals were mortally wounded. In his dying moments Wolfe heard the cry, "They run!" "Who run?" he gasped. "The French!" "God be praised!" he murmured, "I die happy." Five days after this victory the city was surrendered.



202. Close of the War.—The next year the French attempted to recapture Quebec. The effort failed, and a few months later Montreal and all the French ports in Canada were surrendered to the English. Although the fall of Canada closed the contest in America, war continued to be waged elsewhere between France and England. In 1762 Spain entered the war to aid France; but Great Britain completely conquered both nations. In 1763 a treaty of peace was signed at Paris. France yielded to Great Britain all her possessions in North America east of the Mississippi.¹ Spain agreed to give up Florida to Great Britain in exchange for the city of Havana, Cuba, which an English fleet had captured the year before.

203. Results of the French Wars.—The close of the French and Indian War marks the downfall of the French power in America. All the vast region conquered for France by her explorers, missionaries, traders, and settlers was thus wrested from her grasp by her most hated enemy. England

¹ The territory of France west of the Mississippi was ceded to Spain to prevent its falling into the hands of England.

had now undisputed control of the eastern half of North America, from the Arctic Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico. The four wars had cost each side thousands of lives and millions of money. For the American colonists other results were wrought besides those measured in territory, lives, and money. The wars united the people. The widely separated colonists learned to act together against a common foe. The success of colonial troops, fighting side by side with English regulars, taught them self-reliance and independence.



North America at Close of French Wars, 1763.

The hard experiences of war gave the colonial soldiers valuable military training, and developed the genius of such leaders as Washington, Putnam, Stark, Sumter, Marion, and others. On the whole, it may be said that the French wars were a training-school to the American colonists for the great struggle with the mother-country which began twelve years later.

204. Summary.—The French wars extended over a period of seventy-four years, from 1689 to 1763. At the beginning of this period, England held the Atlantic coast from New England to South Carolina. France controlled the region between the mouth of the St. Lawrence and the head of Lake Superior, and from the source of the Mississippi to its mouth. The first three wars, William's, Anne's, George's (mnemonic word, W.-A.-G.), originated in Europe, were waged chiefly on the frontiers of New England and New York, and, save in the surrender of Acadia by the French, resulted in no change of territory. In the last and most important war, the French and Indian, all the English colonies were concerned. It originated in America over a question of disputed territory. The English were unsuccessful until the genius of William Pitt turned the tide. The last great

French stronghold, Quebec, fell after a desperate battle, in which both generals, Wolfe and Montcalm, were killed. By the treaty of peace, 1763, France gave to England all her territory east of the Mississippi; Spain gave Florida to England. To the English colonists, the French Wars were a valuable preparation for the approaching struggle with the mother-country.

205. **Thought Questions.** — What first attracted the French to the country about the mouth of the St. Lawrence? Why did they follow the water-courses in their explorations and settlements? Why did so many French Huguenots settle in the English rather than in the French colonies? What does the fact that European colonists in America were so ready to take up the quarrels of the mother-country prove? How did it happen that so few colonies were engaged in the first three French wars? Why were all the colonies united in the French and Indian War? Did the Iroquois Indians pursue the wisest course? Was the English claim to the land west of the Alleghanies more just than that of the French? Give reason for your opinion. Show how each side might claim that the other began the war. What excuse had the English? the French?

TOPICAL ANALYSIS (FRENCH WARS IN AMERICA).

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