

THE ACADIAN EXILE.

Not justified,—

but yet,—

perhaps explained.

YE who admire the pure Evangeline
And sympathize with manly Gabriel,
Who in the Cambridge poet's lay have seen
That which has deeply stirred your inmost soul,—
Who, reading romance as cold history,
Condemn that crime as ruthless wantonness
Which caused the *habitans*¹ of Acadie
Such heart-breaks, desolation and distress,—

A comrade bids you hear the tale retold,
That all may know of those *coureurs-des-bois*
Who, British-born, and thirty-five years old,²
Still fought to hold Acadie for France :
Though France agreed with England at Utrecht
That all the mainland, and all Newfoundland
Excepting what remains the French Shore yet,
Passed at that moment into Britain's hand.

France still retained the Islands and that shore,
Reserved that epicures might fast in Lent;³
And there her fishers cast their lines for more,
As if still fishing for the continent;⁴

¹ "habitan" Fr. peasant.

² A French officer wrote home from Louisburg: "They have supplied many of the Acadians for more than thirty-five years with the necessities of life, and have not troubled them by forcing them to pay." Then, referring to the hostilities of the Acadians, he adds: "Judge what will be the wrath and vengeance of this cruel nation."

³ Though this was the ostensible reason, the real reason was, no doubt, that France might not lose her splendid training-school for naval reserves.

⁴ Note the aggressiveness of the French fishermen, who, conscious of the fact that they are in training to recruit the navy, have taken possession of the shore permanently, some having built factories, though the treaty at first simply gave them permission to erect flakes for drying their codfish.