

The people at home in their cabins were sleeping,

The Curé was tucked in his four-posted bed ;
While under the willows the river was creeping
As if silent with fear of the wind overhead.

But the little dark church had its own congregation,

The shadows that swayed on the pews and the floor,

While the rafters that creaked were a choir
whose laudation

Had an organ for base in the hurricane's roar.

The rusty gilt cock on the flèche was the preacher,

And scolding and grumpy his voice was to hear,

As he turned to the storm like some faithful old teacher

Who prophesies hard things regardless of fear.

But the service reflected the state of the weather,

For, though each, I must say, did his part with a will ;

The preacher and choir spoke and sang altogether,

And the shapes on the benches would never sit still.

Yet, there was the Host in the midst of the altar,

Where that little red curtain of damask was hung,

The God whom King David has praised in the psalter,

And to whom the whole choir of the ages has sung.

But so big is the heart of our God, the Life-Giver,

That in its life's humour and pathos both meet ;

So I doubt not that night in the church by the river

The poor, old storm's service to Him sounded sweet.

FREDERICK GEORGE SCOTT.

Drummondville, Que.

RAMBLINGS ABOUT THE SOURCES OF CANADIAN HISTORY.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE FIRST EXPLORERS.

ANNAPOLIS BASIN.

It was a lovely morning when we again set out to follow the wandering French adventurers in their gallant attempt to establish a new France amid the hills and bays of Acadia. As we went on board the Nova Scotia steamer that carries passengers across the Bay of Fundy, and through the Basin of Annapolis, for the small sum of two dollars, during the season, the morning was as bright and clear as we could desire, and the sail down the harbour in the fresh sea air allowed us full opportunity to inspect all the lighthouses, fog-horn stations and queer sea-faring craft we encountered on the way. As St. John and the high bluffs which guard its harbour were gradually lost to view, and the widening river insensibly merged in the wider Bay of Fundy, the bold New Brunswick coast, stretching away to north and south of us, grew more and more indistinct, while its opposite neighbour, the coast of Nova Scotia, developed, from an undulating bank of blue cloud, into solid dark hills, in apparently unbroken rank. But, as we draw still nearer, we can discern a slight gap in the rocky rampart, just as De Monts and Poutrencourt had described it on their first exploring voyage. This is what is prosaically termed the "Digby Gut ;" otherwise, the entrance to the famous Basin of Annapolis.

The narrow pass is well guarded by dark wooded crags, with jagged, brown rocks at their base, sometimes hollowed into deep caves, into which the waves must surge and roar at high tide or in a storm. But at present they are left bare by the tide receding over the shingly beach, and the sea has been as calm as a mill-pond during all the way across. As we enter the rocky gateway, the same beautiful vista breaks on our delighted eyes that so charmed those of Marc Lescarbot on, as it happens, this same twenty-seventh day of July in the year 1604. We can easily, in imagination, roll back the three centuries that lie between ; for the grand curves of the wooded hills remain the same, and there is little change even in their aspect, save the cultivation of the lower sides of the hills and the narrow valley-ground along the shore, with here and there a sprinkling of white farm-houses along the hill-sides. Near the southern end of the lovely calm fiord lies the pretty white town of Digby, in the shelter of its almost overhanging ridge, amid its shady gardens and orchards, famous for their black cherries, now ripe. Looking up the long amphitheatre of hills from the high pier of Digby, one cannot wonder at the delight with which its tranquil beauty was described by the French voyagers. The "snowy water-falls" cannot indeed be described from the steamer, but we cannot doubt that amid the rocky recesses of the wooded hills there are many whispering cascades. As we penetrate farther in, the scenery becomes more Arcadian. The hill-side farms and the picturesque old farm-houses under their bowery orchards give the added touch of pastoral charm to the natural beauty of the scene, and we begin to realize that we are really getting into the famous valley of Annapolis, of whose "ninety miles of apple-blossoms" we have so often heard. It has already widened into a good-sized valley by the time we have reached the quaint little town of Annapolis Royal, with its river Annapolis, called by the French, the Equille, gliding peacefully out among the meadows where Lescarbot used to see the herds of moose grazing at their ease. At the pier, which is close to the railway station, where we might have taken train for Halifax, we go ashore and turn at once to the green earthworks which plainly mark the site of an old fort, and there we, in imagination, at once rebuild the imposing "habitation" of Port Royal, with its large banqueting-hall into which the Knights of Champlain's "*Ordre de Bon-temps*" used to carry, in procession, the daily banquet for which they had at hand so varied a *menu*. And, as we gazed down the long, blue expanse of water, glittering in the afternoon sun, and the eye rested with delight on the bold blue peaks and capes that closed in the distant view, we could easily imagine the pleasure with which such lovers of the picturesque as Poutrencourt and Champlain and Lescarbot must have revelled in its ever-changing beauty. We could recall, however, darker times in the eventful history of this interesting little settlement, when the eyes of its inhabitants anxiously searched the long stretch of sparkling waves in the hope of seeing at last the white sails that bore needed succor from France. We could imagine, too, the distress of that day of doom for Port Royal, when Samuel Argall's privateering vessel bore down on the unsuspecting and undefended post, and plundered and laid waste at his malicious pleasure, under the pretext that the French colonists, with De Monts

at their head, were trespassing on the rights of His British Majesty, having first seized the opportunity of stealing in the absence of Poutrencourt his letters of authority from the King of France.

Standing here, in the centre of so much ill-fated struggle and endeavor, there seemed to rise before us the whole tragic story of dauntless enterprise, of heroic endurance of cruel disappointment, of renewed effort, and final hopeless abandonment of a cherished design, which is but one of the various precious memories that cluster so thickly around this quiet Arcadian nook among the hills.

For Port Royal's subsequent history, almost as eventful as the first pages of the story, must not be forgotten ; and, all through it, the lights and shadows seem to alternate as swiftly as they do on these grand wooded hills on a day of conflict between clouds and sunshine. After Poutrencourt had finally abandoned the lovely spot on which he had hoped to found his New World dominion, he seems to have bequeathed his rights, such as they were, to young Charles La Tour, the hero of Fort La Tour at St. John, whose tragic fall has been already alluded to. Here this chivalrous young noble, the flower and hope of Acadia in his day, fixed his residence for some time before removing to another stronghold near Cape Sable, which he named Fort Louis. His father, who had become, under English influence, a traitor to his French master, brought out two ships containing Scottish colonists, whom he tried to settle at Port Royal, where, for ten years, they contended with the ravages of disease and the attacks of hostile Indians. The two or three survivors went over to the French, by whom another attempt was made to settle on the spot. But once more, under Cromwell's rule, an English fleet sailed up the beautiful fiord on a mission of destruction, and reduced the place to smoking ruins. Charles II. restored it to its first owners ; but, in 1600, came Sir William Phipps, who forced the old French Governor of Acadia to capitulate under honourable terms of surrender, which Sir William, unfortunately for English honour, broke, plundering the place, and making M. Meneval a prisoner of war.

A few more dark pages were still to be added to a record that strongly illustrates "man's inhumanity to man" which has so overshadowed the history of our race. A visit from two pirate vessels seems to have completed the ruin of Port Royal, after which the French seemed to have been allowed to retain what did not seem to be much worth retaining. Then came expeditions from ambitious Massachusetts, which the colonists had to resist from their own resources as well as they were able, vainly looking for help from France. But, finally, General Nicholson's well-equipped forces proved too strong for the French General Subercase, with his three hundred men, and, after a six day's siege, when town and garrison were almost reduced to starvation, Subercase was obliged to yield to superior strength, and New England finally took possession of one of the fairest posts of New France, changing the name of the place to Annapolis Royal in honour of "good Queen Anne."

But there were still loyal French in Acadia, and the old ties of friendship between them and the Indians were not to be broken by the best efforts of the English. The French, in turn, again besieged Annapolis, and did all they could to harass its