

Origin of the Acadians.

CHAPTER II.

Of the many who have read Longfellow's "Evangeline," how few there are who fully realize that the poet's pathetic Acadia is but the picture of a sensitive people, portraying their simple mode of life and their multiple misfortunes. Yet our Nova Scotia once bore that romantic name, and her people were the Acadians of history, romance and song.

The story carries us back to that long ago, when, from the frozen sea to the tropical gulf, this vast country was an unknown wilderness, its solitude unbroken save by the few English colonies on the Atlantic shore of what is now the United States, and the French settlements in Canada; each claiming that which belonged to neither, and each fiercely jealous of the other.

Thus the two most powerful nations of Europe sought extension of dominion, and addition of wealth, while colonists of all classes from various quarters, endeavored to improve their condition by casting their fortunes in the wilds of the "New World."

The experience of all these early pioneers was usually pitiful in the extreme, it not infrequently happening that they fell victims to cold, starvation and disease, to the hostility of neighboring adventurers, or to the tomahawk of the savage, to be finally either entirely destroyed or as a tattered remnant return to their old-time homes.

Among those, who so early as 1604 cast their lot in the western wilderness, was a body of French people from Normandy, who chanced to fix their new