

IV.—*Origin of the French Canadians.*

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On seeing this title many persons may express the opinion jocularly that the origin of the French-Canadian people was France, but we shall see presently that there are other things to be considered in this connection.

What part of France did they come from?

Under what influence?

In what manner did they come?

How long did the period of emigration last?

From whence did they receive their present characteristics?

How did they acquire their present form of language?

Why are not some of the different "patois" spoken in France heard here?

And what about the half-breeds?

We intend to explain the formation of a certain number of French people into settlers on the St. Lawrence during the 17th Century and from which has sprung the whole of the present French Canadian population. Nothing will be said of the tradesmen, the functionaries and the clergy who composed the "French" or floating element of the colony until it disappeared at the conquest.

I. Acadia was peopled by a company of traders between 1636 and 1670 or thereabouts. No one has yet satisfactorily demonstrated where the French of that colony came from, though their dialect would indicate their place of origin to be in the neighbourhood of the Bay of Biscay or the mouth of River Loire. They are distinct from the French Canadians in some particulars and not allied with the settlers of the St. Lawrence. As a matter of fact the two French colonies in question have lived apart from one another as "Acadians" and "Canadians," for more than two centuries and a half now.

Inter-marriages between Acadians and Canadians only commenced after 1755, when some Acadians took refuge in Canada.

Brittany never traded with Canada, except that, from 1535 to 1600, some of the St. Malo navigators used to visit the lower St. Lawrence and barter with the Indians, but there were no European settlers in the whole of that pretended new France. Afterwards the regime of the fur companies, which extended from 1608 to 1632, was adverse to colo-