

Atlantic they had carried all that jealousy and hatred of England and Englishmen that even yet is to be found in the proud heart of old France. For years the struggle was carried on, and the poor Colonists of Acadia were kept in painful suspense as to what their fate should be. The year 1713 brought them the mournful tidings that they and their possessions were ceded to the British Government, and that all the ties of nationality between France and Acadia had been severed by the sword, and their severance confirmed by treaty. This was a heavy blow to the French Acadians, and it was with the greatest difficulty that they were peaceably induced to take the oath of allegiance to the British Government. Not many years elapsed, however, before an opportunity offered for testing their loyalty. War was declared between France and England, and Lower Canada, now the Province of Quebec, became the battle field. The Acadians were accused of assisting their old friends and fellow countrymen in the struggle. It is asserted that at the siege of Beau Séjour they assisted the French by sending them supplies of ammunition and provision; and whether this be true or not, one thing is certain, that the British believed them guilty, and soon after proceeded to take vengeance on them. An order was issued forfeiting their lands, tenements and cattle to the English Crown, and ordering their removal from Acadia, and their dispersion throughout the other Colonies as far as possible from their own Province. Of these severe measures the Acadians knew nothing, until plans were matured for carrying them into effect. The Governor of the Colony issued a summons calling the whole population to a meeting, and at this gathering he communicated the substance of the order of the British Government. It was a gloomy day in the little village of Grand Pré, and sorrow and sighing were heard in every cottage in the beautiful valleys, and over the wide fertile meadows. A few of the boldest on the first impulse threatened resistance, but the wisest saw the hopelessness of all opposition, and soon all began to realise their fate, and prepare to meet it.

At a little distance from the village of Grand Pré, and nearer the Basin of Minas, lived Benedict Bellefontaine, the wealthiest farmer in the district, and the father of Evangeline.

“Hearty and hale was he, an oak that is covered with snowflakes,

White as the snow were his locks, and his cheeks as brown as the oak leaves:

Fair was she to behold, that maiden of seventeen summers.”

One of old Benedict's nearest and dearest friends and neighbors, was the village blacksmith, Basil Lajeunesse by name, and among the many devoted lovers of the fair Evangeline, none were made so welcome, both by Benedict and his daughter, as Gabriel the blacksmith's son. “He was a valiant youth, and his face, like the face of the morning, gladdened the earth with its light, and ripened thought into action.” Gabriel and Evangeline had long known and loved each other, and both the old farmer and his friend, the smith, were of the opinion that the time had arrived when the preliminaries of their marriage should be formally arranged. The venerable Notary of Grand Pré was accordingly summoned, the bride's dowry in flocks and herds was named, the great seal of the law set like a sun on the parchment, and all things were happily arranged.

At the time we are now speaking of, the painful tidings referred to above had not been made known. The British ships were riding at anchor out on the beautiful Basin of Minas, the villagers were at their accustomed labour and enjoyed the blessings of plenty and peace. In the poet's words, “Every house was an inn, where all were welcomed and feasted; for with this simple people, who lived like brothers together, all things were held in common, and what one had was another's.” Evangeline's bridal day at length arrived, and in the orchard, perfumed with golden fruit, was spread the marriage feast. There was good old