

CHAPTER I.

A Sketch of the changes Nova Scotia underwent between the Discovery of the Country and the year 1758 when the first General Assembly met at Halifax.

NO Part of the British American Settlements, has occasioned so many contests, or has been so often granted and purchased, conquered and ceded, as Nova Scotia. It has been several times alternately possessed by the French and English; the former claiming it by priority of possession, the latter by discovery. It was originally regarded by the English as part of Cabot's discovery of Terra Nova; and was afterwards comprehended within the boundary of a large portion of America called North Virginia. The first settlement of the French in Acadia was made at a very early period, being four years before the smallest hut was erected in Canada. In 1603, Monsieur De Monts was ordered by Henry the fourth of France to explore the country and select a suitable place for settlement. De Monts, after having met with many disasters incident to a Navigation, where there were no charts to direct, and where the shoals, banks and harbours were totally unknown, completed his examination of the eastern, southern, and western coasts. Instead of fixing towards the east of the peninsula, where the emigrants would have had larger seas, and easy navigation, and an excellent cod fishery, he chose a small bay, afterwards called the French Bay, which had none of these advantages. It has been said, that he was induced by the beauty of Port Royal, where a thousand ships may ride in safety from every wind, where there is an excellent bottom, at all times four or five fathom of water, and eighteen at the entrance. It is most probable that he was led to chuse this situation, from its vicinity to the countries abounding in furs. This conjecture is confirmed by the following circumstance; that the first monopolizers took the utmost pains to divert the attention of their countrymen, whom restlessness or necessity brought into these regions, from clearing the woods, breeding cattle, fishing, and from every kind of culture, choosing rather to engage the industry of these adventurers, in hunting or in trading with the savages. Port Royal therefore, since called