

was constantly taken. It undoubtedly afforded some satisfaction to the New-Englanders, to ravage this colony, and to retard its progress; but still this was not sufficient to dispel the diffidence excited by a nation always more formidable by what she is able to do, than by what she really does. Obligated as they were, however unwillingly, to restore their conquest at each treaty of peace, they waited with impatience till Great-Britain should acquire such a superiority as would enable her to dispense with this restitution. The end of the war, on account of the Spanish succession, brought on the decisive moment; and the court of Versailles was for ever deprived of a possession of which it had never known the importance.

The ardour which the English had shown for the possession of this territory did not manifest itself afterwards in the care they took to maintain or to improve it. Having built a very slight fortification at Port-Royal, which had taken the name of Annapolis, in honour of Queen Anne, they contented themselves with putting a very small garrison in it. The indifference shewn by the government infected the nation, a circumstance very uncommon in a free country. Only five or six English families came over to Acadia, which remained inhabited by the first colonists, who were only persuaded to stay upon a promise made them of never being compelled to bear arms against their ancient country. Such was the attachment which the French then had for the honour and glory of their country. Cherished by their government, respected by foreign nations, and attached to their King by a series of prosperities which had rendered them illustrious and aggrandized them, they were inspired with that spirit of patriotism which arises from success. They considered it as glorious to bear the name of Frenchmen, and could not think of giving up that title. The Acadians, therefore, who, in submitting to a new yoke, had sworn never to bear arms against their former standards, were called the French Neutrals.

There were twelve or thirteen hundred of them settled in the capital, the rest were dispersed in the neighbouring country. No magistrate was ever set over them; and they were never acquainted with the laws of England. No rents, tributes, or taxes of any kind were ever exacted from them. Their new sovereign seemed to have forgotten them; and himself was a total stranger to them.

Hunting and fishing, which had formerly been the delight of the colony, and might still have supplied it with subsistence, had no further attraction for a sim-

ple and quiet people, and gave way to agriculture. It had been established in the marshes and the low lands, by repelling the sea and rivers which covered these plains with dikes. These grounds yielded fifty for one at first, and afterwards fifteen or twenty for one at least. Wheat and oats succeeded best in them; but they likewise produced rye, barley, and maize. There were also great plenty of potatoes, the use of which was become common.

At the same time the immense meadows were covered with numerous flocks. They computed as much as sixty thousand head of horned cattle; and most families had several horses, though the tillage was carried on by oxen. The habitations, built all of wood, were extremely convenient, and furnished as neatly as a substantial farmer's house in Europe. They bred a great deal of poultry of all kinds, which made a variety in their food, for the most part wholesome and plentiful. Their common drink was beer and cyder, to which they sometimes added rum. The produce of their own flax, or the fleeces of their own sheep, generally served them for their usual cloathing. With these they made common linens and coarse cloths. If any of them had a desire for articles of greater luxury, they drew them from Annapolis or Louisbourg, and gave, in exchange, corn, cattle, or furs.

The neutral French had nothing else to give their neighbours, and made still fewer exchanges among themselves, because each separate family was able and had been used to provide for its wants. They therefore knew nothing of paper currency, which was so common throughout the rest of North America. Even the small quantity of specie which had slipped into the colony did not inspire that activity in which consists its real value.

Their manners were, of course, extremely simple. There never was a cause, either civil or criminal, of importance enough to be carried before the court of judicature established at Annapolis. Whatever little differences arose from time to time among them were always amicably adjusted by their elders. All their public acts were drawn by their pastors, who had likewise the keeping of their wills, for which and their religious services the inhabitants voluntarily paid a twenty-seventh part of their harvest.

They were always plentiful enough to afford more means than there were objects for generosity. Real misery was entirely unknown, and benevolence prevented the demands of poverty. Every misfortune was relieved, as it were, before it could be felt, without ostentation on the one hand,