

carious foothold in Acadia. At a few isolated points they raised some rudely constructed forts, around which, in the course of time, a number of settlers built huts and cultivated small farms. The rivalry between England and France commenced on the continent as soon as the British Colonies had made some progress, and prevented the French ever establishing flourishing settlements all over Acadia. At no time was the French Government particularly enamoured of a country which seemed to promise but a scanty harvest of profit to its proprietors; for the history of Acadia shows that the Kings of France and their Ministers left its destinies for years in the hands of mere adventurers and traders. In the course of time they began to have some conception of the importance of Acadia as a base of operations against the aggressive New Englanders, and were forced at last, in self-defence, to build Louisbourg on the eastern coast of Ile Royale. But then it was too late to retrieve the ground they had lost by their indifference during the early history of the country. Had the statesmen of France been gifted with practical foresight, they would have seen the possession of Acadia was an absolute necessity to a power which hoped to retain its dominion by the St. Lawrence and the great Lakes.

I. PORT ROYAL.

The history of the first fort raised by the French in Acadia illustrates the difficulties which the pioneers of France on this continent had to contend against from the very outset of their perilous experiment of colonization. When the adventurers came to Acadia with De Monts—the feudal lord of half a continent by virtue of Henry's royal charter—there was not a single European settlement from the frozen Pole to the ancient Spanish town of St. Augustine, among the swamps of Florida. When the rock-girt islet of the St. Croix was found

altogether unsuitable for their first settlement, the French with one accord sought the lovely basin, surrounded with well-wooded hills and a fertile country abounding with game, which is now known as the basin of the Annapolis, one of the inlets of the Bay of Fundy, so noted for its "tides" and "bores." Two hundred and seventy years ago, the first timbers of the fort were raised on the banks of the Equille, now the Annapolis River, by the command of Baron de Poutrincourt, who was the first seigneur of that domain. The French were enchanted with the scenery and their new settlement. "It was unto us a thing marvellous," says the first historian of America, "to see the fair distance and the largeness of it, and the mountains and hills that environed it, and I wondered how so fair a place did remain desert, being all filled with woods. * * * At the very beginning we were desirous to see the country up the river, where we found meadows almost continually above twelve leagues of ground, among which brooks do run without number, coming from the hills and mountains adjoining. The woods are very thick on the shores of the water."

A chequered history was that of Port Royal from the day of its foundation. Men who have borne a prominent part in the colonization of this continent were among the first inhabitants. Champlain, the founder of Quebec; De Poutrincourt, the chivalrous, zealous chief of Acadian colonization; L'Escarbot, the genial, chatty historian, are among the men who throw a bright halo around the history of the first fort. L'Escarbot has left us a pleasing description of the trials and successes of the pioneers, in which we see illustrated all the versatility and vivacity of the French character. When we read his account of the doings of the colonists, we must regret that there had not always been a L'Escarbot in aftertimes to describe the varied incidents of the career of the fort, until the *fleur-de-lis* was lowered for ever on its bastions. Let us briefly