

The Land of Evangeline.

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True to our mission of making the country known as much as possible, we publish the following paper, with slight abridgments, from the pen of a gentleman, whom the editor knows well by name, and from having heard an historical record read by him, as a delegate from Manitoba, before the English section of the Royal Society of Canada, three or four years ago. The original appeared in the *Winnipeg Sun*.

We had spent a pleasant week in Halifax, and on a beautiful morning started north, by the Windsor and Annapolis Railway, "on pleasure bent." There were three of us—a lawyer, a journalist and a professor—and on account of our initials we passed as the B. C. D. club. It is an old saying that two are company, but three are none. Under some circumstances this may be true, but it was not so with the B. C. D.'s. When you travel it is much more lively to have three than two. It is always two against one. All are aboard the train for the apple orchards. Nova Scotia grows the best flavoured, best-appearing apples in the world, they say. We saw only the blossoms, but these were certainly full of hope. Our company on the railway contained Governor St. John, of Kansas temperance fame; also, W. H. Blanchard, of Winnipeg, uncle of the late Sadley Blanchard, of Winnipeg, and Dr. Blanchard. He lives at Windsor, and gave the party much interesting information about the town. Windsor is reached, and a well-known gentleman of the town was present to meet the B. C. D.'s. Our party had been fully noticed in the *Chronicle* and *Herald* of Halifax as a party of scientific, historical and generally important persons, and a good send-off is a great help. The secretary of the club had sent on ahead to a number of desirable persons about our journey. Accordingly, at Windsor an old Nor'western authority, Professor Hind, came to meet us. He could not accompany the party, but brought a basketful of most splendid roses. Their sweet odour kept the veteran explorer in our minds for days. Prof. Hind's description of the Northwest, in his journey on the "Assiniboine and Saskatchewan expedition of 1858," is one of the most reliable accounts ever given of the Northwest. It was a pleasure to see the aforetime explorer and to chat with him a few minutes as the train rested. Soon after passing Windsor the club alighted from the train at Lower Horton, and was now in the country of Evangeline. The apple blossoms filled the air with their odour, and we knew that this was the "Acadian land," and, wonderful to say, as the club landed and were being hurried off to our kind friend, A. McNutt Patterson, Esq., a member of one of the best known families of Nova Scotia, our eyes fell, on the wayside, on a representative of the white cattle of the district, which the members at once concluded must be a descendant of Evangeline's beautiful heifer, which, in the former days,

Proud of her snow-white hide and the ribbon that waved from her collar,
Quietly paced and slow, as if conscious of human affection.

At our pleasant resting-place there was an hour to wait for dinner, and so the B. C. D.'s sat on the lawn, looking north-eastward to the "Mines Basin," the upper part of the Bay of Fundy, and the chairman of the club was set to work reading "Evangeline" on the very scene of the tale. Yes, out from our place on the rising ground, thousands of acres of sea meadow were to be seen, and where the

Dikes that the hands of the farmers had raised with labour incessant,
Shut out the turbulent tide.

These vast meadows, covered with waving grass, are still the source of wealth of this part of Nova Scotia. Yes, over there to the right may be seen the entrance of the river into the basin, the very spot where the ships of the British, so famous in the story of the poor Acadians, rode

In the Gaspereau's mouth.

Along the rising ground, now occupied as our resting-place, had been the

Houses with frames of oak and of chestnut,

in which the Acadian farmers lived. There were apple trees to the right of us, apple trees to the left of us. Yet on a rising ground, a little farther away to the left, appeared a beautiful, newly-planted orchard of many acres in extent, and on enquiry the information was given that it bore the name of "Saint Eulalie." How appropriate, as it brought back vividly the heroine of the region, who was called the "Sunshine of Saint Eulalie." Dinner over, the club was formally called upon by the physician of the district, a member of a well-known "blue nose" family, Dr. Chipman. The doctor is well up in all the folk-lore of the region, and immediately proceeded to conduct the B.C.D.'s to the various points of historic interest. His splendid team and comfortable carriage brought back, by strange contrast, the "broad-wheeled wains" of the old Acadians as they must have lumbered past. In a few minutes after starting the site of the village of Grand Pré was reached. Grand Pré is doubly famous. Here was pointed out the very spot where, in the old border wars between the English and French, Col. Noble, in 1757, and his band of British soldiers, were surprised in the night, and where the bodies of the poor fellows killed had been buried. But it was the Acadian village that most concerned us. In a field, directly in front of the little railway station of Grand Pré, is a clump of willow trees, and near them a well, which identifies the place. Near this well was dug up, a few years ago, a coffin, which was taken to point out the site of the belfry from which "softly the Angelus sounded." The coffin was soon cut up into relics. Our accomplished cicerone having pointed out the rows of old willow trees, and even one gnarled old apple tree, all said to be of the Acadian time, drove us a few miles over the country to a real find of relics of the time of the Acadian peasants. These are in possession of R. R. Duncan, Esq., of Grand Pré. They were all taken out of the famous well of the village, and included, among other things, many useful articles, which brought vividly to mind the famous character of "Basil the blacksmith," and afforded the B. C. D.'s many opportunities for appropriate jests in their subsequent journey. There were iron chains, pinchers, knives, hammers, spoons, a hatchet and the like, and a number of heavy iron clamps, which have puzzled all the antiquarians as to their use. These were certainly rusty enough to have belonged to the earliest workers in the iron age. When looking at relics it is best to be of a trustful disposition. Mr. Duncan is said to have been offered \$1,000 for his collection by young Vanderbilt, of New York, but refused the offer. Leaving behind the site of the village of historic memories, the carriage took us over the ridge, which overlooks the Annapolis valley. To the writer came back constantly visions of the expatriated Acadians. No doubt Longfellow has presented to us the poet's view of Acadian life, but, after all, the poet often gives a truer picture than the historian. The historian becomes confused and blinded in his attempt to disentangle the knotted threads of action, while the poet soars into the region of sorrow, fear and hope, and gives a true picture of the time at least. After carefully examining the "Nova Scotian archives," gathered together by T. B. Akin, Esq., and Parkman's case against the Acadians in his "Wolfe and Montcalm," as well as ex-Governor Archibald's paper, and while not excusing Abbé Casgrain for showing too much French-Canadian feeling in this discussion, yet the chairman of the club is compelled to say that the sad story of the poet remains with him, to the exclusion largely of the considerations of state necessity, by which the expulsion of the Acadians is justified. But, while the reverie is going on, the ridge is crossed, and the club is rapidly entering the valley of the Gaspereau. All the rivers here are tidal, which gives them, twice a day, a strange appearance, to a landsman from the interior. Here was passed the residence of Judge Weatherbe, a noted experimenter in apple culture. The open-

ing of the English apple market in the last few years, and the giving up of potato growing, which was so marked a feature of the lower provinces before Confederation, has resulted in the planting of thousands of new orchards; and while a western man sees little or no advance in the farming, the prairie dweller cannot help envying the "blue-noses" their orchards. Over the ridge again, and on its descent, there bursts upon us the aristocratic village of Wolfville. This is a village principally of one street, and yet it is the seat of a university, viz., the Acadian College of the Baptist Church. The long, straggling village is a perfect avenue of beautiful trees. The B. C. D.'s, with the doctor as their guide, as representing all the estates, called on the president of the college, and went through the substantial buildings, which contain a museum, having a particularly good mineral collection, and a neatly arranged library. The janitor was a good-natured son of Africa, and the decided features of his ebon face remains with us still. Leaving the classic shades, the party hurried off to catch the train, and with profuse thanks, presented by the club in its most effective manner to the son of Esculapius, who had so hospitably entertained its members, was soon en route for Hantsport, on the W. & A. Railway. On the train was Prof. Roberts, of King's College, Windsor, who, some say, has the truest spirit of poetry of any of our young *littérateurs*. He is an unassuming young man; did not strike us as having any "transcendental aestheticism" of the man of genius, but as being a common-sense young fellow. One of his critics, the day after, said he could see and describe more on a given square inch of surface than any man he knew. The club regarded this as a tribute to the penetration and intensity of the poet. How remarkable the man would be with whom we could find no fault! Over night at Hantsport, taking in a temperance lecture at St. John's, and up early next morning. The B. C. D.'s walked a couple of miles to pay their respects to the veteran Micmac missionary. This remarkable man, Silas T. Rand, is said to be the best living scholar in the Micmac tongue, a dialect of the Chippewa. He has been a Baptist missionary for forty years among the Indians, visiting them from time to time. He lives according to Muller's principle—"by faith." It is remarkable that his surprising ability as a linguist so long escaped recognition. It is said that the secretary of the B. C. D. club is largely responsible for his good qualities being brought to notice in the public press. Mr. Rand received in the same year (1886) the degree of D.D. from Acadia College, Wolfville, and LL.D. from Queen's College, Kingston. Our early morning visit was, however, in vain, as the worthy missionary was off on one of his "journeys of faith." His wife said that when he felt stirred to go abroad nothing could keep him, and his going was generally not in vain. From Hantsport a trim little steamer bore the club across the Basin of Mines. Around the whole basin is "Acadian land." The captain was impressed with the importance of the B.C.D.'s, and so went out of his course to allow them to gaze at the spot where, as Longfellow has it, "Away to the northward Blomidon rose." Blomidon is a great headland of new red sandstone layers, but on the top of it there has been an overflow of lava, which is solidified into a dark, massive trap rock. Every spring beautiful crystals from the lava formation are carried down to the base of the cliff and are picked up on the beach. Blomidon is the Micmac land of romance. The great prominent headland must impress white and red man alike. To the west of it is a long tongue of land called Cape Split. With this is associated the name of Gluscap, the Micmac Hiawatha. It is said that the Basin of Mines was originally shut in as a lake. The water was overflowing the shores and threatened to destroy every living thing. Gluscap, the Indian deliverer, placed his strong, broad shoulder behind Blomidon, and, hurling it round, opened up the way by which the high water escaped into the Bay of Fundy. Enjoying the sail, viewing the mountains of Cumberland in the distance, and the group of islands, called the Five Islands, up the basin, the club