

Original.
GENTLEMEN ADVENTURERS IN
ACADIA.

BY J. G. BOURINOT.

II.—CHARLES DE LA TOUR.

Among the adventurers whose names are intimately associated with the history of early colonization in Acadia, no one occupies a more prominent position than Charles de St. Etienne, Seigneur de la Tour. His perseverance and courage, amid the difficulties that surrounded him in the American wilderness, entitle him to a place by the side of the bravest pioneers of civilization in the Acadian land. Like many others in those days, it was the object of his ambition to win for himself and family a name in the new world, and how far he succeeded in it, will be seen in the course of the following pages. As we review the incidents of his eventful career, perhaps no feature of his character will prepossess us more strongly in his favor than the devotion which he displayed when the most resolute attempts were made to win him over to the hereditary enemy of his beloved France. Looking back to the century when he lived, we can see him often a wanderer with the savages in the depths of the forests,—anon determinedly defending the French posts on the Atlantic coast, and on the River St. John,—anon exerting all his art of diplomacy among the stern-faced Puritans of Massachusetts,—anon arraying his retainers and battling for his rights, like some bold chief of the feudal times. In the old countries of Europe, such qualities as he possessed must have gained him fame and wealth; but his patient endeavor in the Acadian wilderness was ill-requited. In those days there was little reputation of an enduring character, and but little wealth to be won by the pioneer who ventured into those countries, which are now the home of a wealthy and enterprising people. The fisherman on the banks, or the *courreur des bois*, ranging through the forest, might, in the course of years of toil, acquire a

modest competency; but for the "gentleman adventurer," who would win an empire for France, there was too often nothing but hardship and neglect. The King and ministers only saw in Acadia a befogged, sterile country, which had neither gold nor silver mines, and would never repay them for the expense of colonization. In the course of time, they opened their eyes to the importance of the magnificent country watered by the St. Lawrence and the great lakes; but, with an unpardonable want of foresight, they never saw till it was too late that the possession of Acadia, with its noble Atlantic frontage, was indispensable to a power which would grasp a continent, and perpetuate the language and institutions of France in the western world. Had the French Government energetically seconded the efforts of those enterprising, courageous men who devoted their lives to the work of reclaiming Acadia for France and civilization, England could never have made so easy a conquest of the northern part of the continent. Three or four insignificant forts, for a long time, gave the only evidence of the French occupation of Acadia; and it was not till far into the eighteenth century that French statesmen saw the mistake they had made in not having taken a stronger position on the Atlantic coast of New France; and, at last, built up the formidable fortress of Louisbourg, at the entrance of the Gulf of the St. Lawrence. But then it was too late to retrieve the mistakes that had been made in the previous century. England had, long before, seen the importance of Nova Scotia; whilst the British colonies, which were rapidly growing in wealth and population, could never agree to allow the French to take a firm foothold in a country occupying so important a position in reference to the rest of the continent.

Of the boyhood of Charles de la Tour, we know little or nothing. His father belonged to a noble family of the Province of Champagne, so famous for its vine-clad hills; but to so low an ebb had his fortunes fallen by the commencement of the seventeenth cen-