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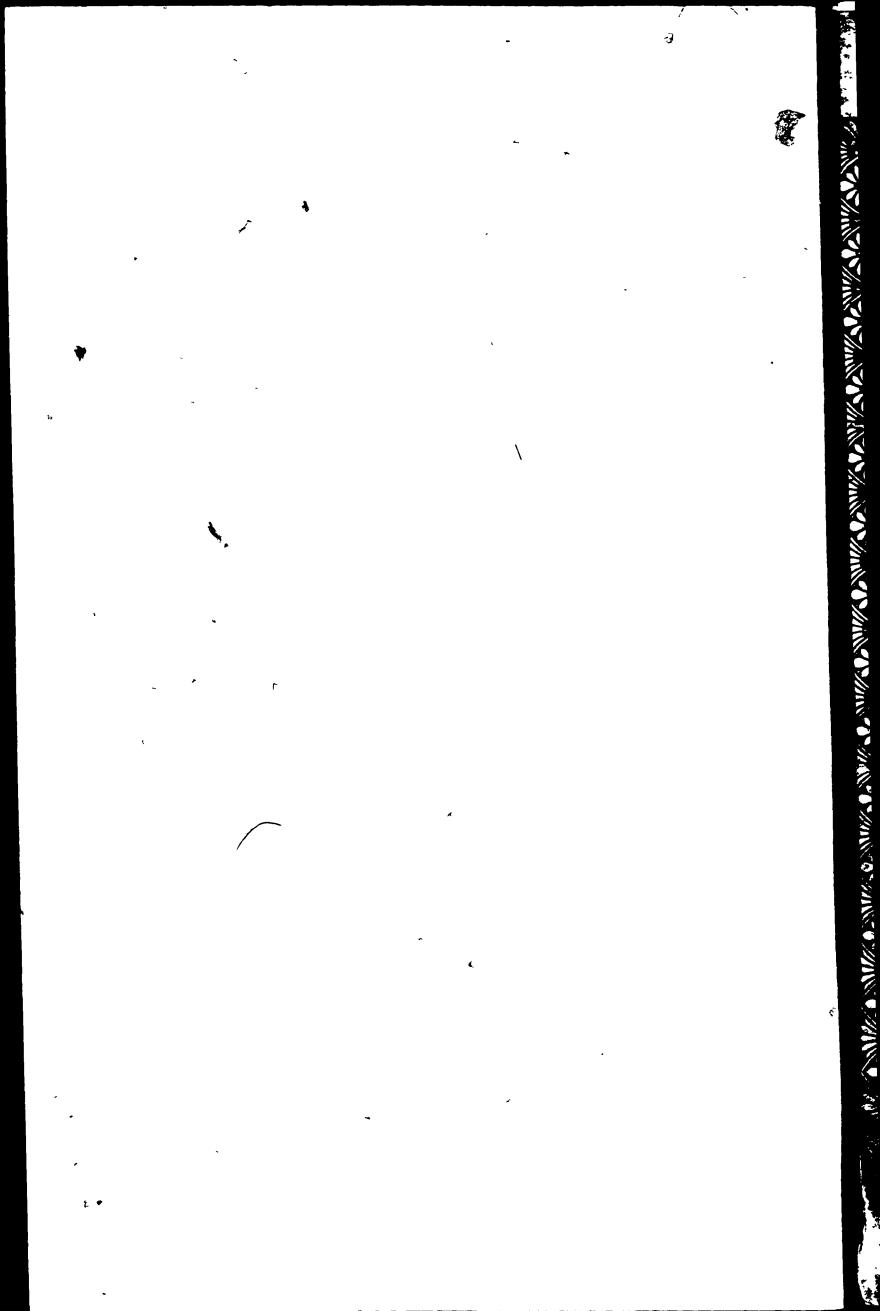
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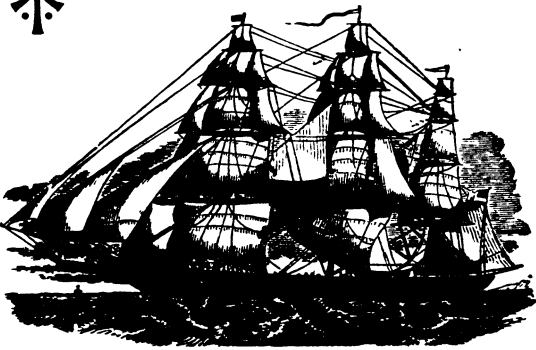


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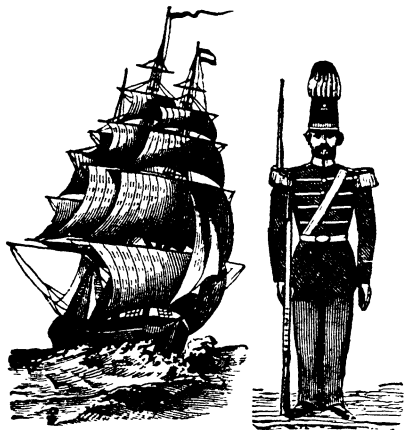
ACADIANS



DEPARTURE OF THE ACADIANS.

THE PEOPLE OF

Longfellow's "Evangeline."



REMOVING THE ACADIANS.

THE EXILE

OF THE

ACADIANS,

THE PEOPLE OF

Longfellow's "Evangeline."

—BY—

Mde. Morel de La Durantaye

TOLEDO, O.:
THE B. F. WADE CO., PRINTERS
1888.



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• THE ACADIANS •

AND THEIR FATE.

OF the many who have read Longfellow's *Evangeline* with unbounded delight, how few there are who know that the plaintive, poetic story of Acadia, is but a picture of a real people, illustrating their simple mode of life and their multiple misfortunes. Yet our Nova Scotia once bore that romantic name, and her people were the Acadians of history, romance and song.

The story carries us back to that long ago, when, from the frozen sea to the tropical gulf, this vast country was a nearly unknown wilderness, its monotony being undisturbed save by a few English colonies on the Atlantic shore of what is now the United States, and like settlements by the French in Canada, each claiming by assumed right that which belonged to neither, and each fiercely jealous of the acquirements of the other.

Thus, the two most powerful nations of Europe sought extension of dominion and addition of wealth, while colonists, from various quarters and of all classes, endeavored to improve their condition by casting their fortunes in the wilds of the "new world."

The experience of all these early pioneers was usually pitiful in the extreme, it not infrequently happening that

they fell victims to cold, starvation and disease, to the hostility of neighboring adventurers or to the tomahawk of the savage, to be finally either entirely destroyed or as a tattered remnant return to their old time homes.

Among those who so early as 1604 cast their lot in the western wilderness was a body of French people from Normandy, who chanced to fix their new homes in Acadia, the peninsula now known as Nova Scotia. This effort proved a failure, especially because of the inroads of settlers from the English colonies of Virginia, who claimed the peninsula by right of discovery, and whose people, led by a freebooter, in the end utterly destroyed the colony.

The French government had given the rugged realm its tropical name, but in the turmoil of the nations, the English obtained possession, and in 1621, with greater fitness, pronounced it to be Nova Scotia or New Scotland. But neither tropical nor frigid designation brought settled quietude to its borders. It became the shuttlecock of war and diplomacy. In due time the French became its master, to be overcome by their persistent enemy in 1654. Thirteen years later the French were in power, fickle fortune returning it to the English in 1714. Thus, experience had shown little certainty of tenure, and that the imperious Englishmen so deemed it is amply shown in the fact that the treaty by which it was secured to them contained the galling proviso that their new subjects, the Acadians or French citizens of Nova Scotia, might enjoy freedom of worship, they being Catholics while the English government was intensely Protestant, and still more, they were granted immunity from bearing arms, being thus permitted to enjoy the benefits of a government, and be by it protected, without raising a hand even in their own defense. This unprecedented favor may have partly risen from the fact that joining the

English forces they would be brought face to face with her hereditary foe, and thus be compelled to do battle against personal friends and relatives; but odious as this tacit citizenship must have been to the haughty English government, it must be stated in justice to it that the treaty pledge was faithfully kept.

It seems passing strange that the well-known vicissitudes and turmoil did not make a bar to immigration. But it did not do so. During each period in which France held the land, her people, with consummate pertinacity, sought homes in Acadia; the English with equal blindness, hurrying to their new Scotland during the time of their possession.

This seems all the more wonderful when the fact is recalled, that the varied changes in mastery so briefly noted, were always the results of harassing and bloody struggles, participated in by both French and English regular troops, the militia or citizen soldiers of both sides, in every case each party being aided by the blood-thirsty savages, who spared neither age or sex, and in whose hands immediate death was usually a desired blessing. The cheek alternately pales with anger and blushes with shame, as we review the true history of the part taken by either party in these fierce contests for empire, contests that excited the deepest concern in the great capitals and courts of Europe, three thousand miles away. —

The Acadian people, not only brought with them the habits of the Norman peasant, but adhered to their peculiarities with unyielding tenacity. In consequence of this, they became noted for simplicity of habits, for patient and persistent toil from which followed remarkable thrift; for devotion to the religion of their fathers, ardent attachment to their fatherland and an unlimited devotion to their

new homes. Totally void of those ambitious aims that fires the hearts of other peoples, they sought nothing beyond their little land possessions, and luxuriated in the comforts found in their unostentatious habitations. Every impulse of their hearts centered there, no toil was too severe, if it but tended to increase their stock and store. The soil of the low grounds being most fertile, they built dikes, by which the waters were forced back, thus converting marshes into reclaimed fields where the cereals grew in abundance, while thousands of every variety of cattle grazed on the adjacent plains. Indulging in none of the vanities that corrodes and impoverishes more pretentious communities, frugality reigned everywhere supreme. Without education, and relying on the "cure" for instruction and guidance in all essential things, they kept aloof from others, desiring most to be by the boisterous world forgotten. Absence of ambitious aims circumscribed their wants and rendered possible the existence of such typical band of brothers, asking only to be permitted to enjoy their toil, their contentment, neighbors and religion.

It would seem that these meager favors were their due and should have been accorded them, but instead they were the shuttlecocks of the grim contestants for power and empire. Long weary years of contention with repeated change of ruling powers had at last brought the treaty of 1713 before referred to, apparently bringing with it the long desired repose.

Under the English regime, in accordance with the terms of this compact, nearly half a century had passed, the Acadians being nominally English subjects, but clinging with the keenest ardor to old memories, bound in every heart sympathy to those who spoke their native tongue, and who in every way were to them most near and agree-

le. In every sense their rulers were to them foreign, the
 me engrafted on their land cold and cheerless, their
 beams revels in Acadia.

Thus the embers of unrest were ever warm in their
 somas, and calm and well disposed as they were, required
 t little effort to fan it to a brighter glow. To the interior
 anadian colonies, conditions were ever present promoting
 active effort. Nova Scotia, now an English province,
 cupied a position on their eastern borders that very largely
 terfered with their access to the ocean, which was not
 ly the highway of trade, but the only one through which
 ey could maintain connection with France. Fierce tribes

Indians, ardently attached to the interests of the Cana-
 an colonies, occupied adjacent lands, and secret emissaries
 ere ever busy fomenting acrimonies in the hearts of both
 e gentle souled Acadians and their neighbors, the brutal
 vages

To the English, the accorded neutral citizenship was
 xtremely distasteful, and when to this was added the
 unrest wrought by the emissaries of France, it became
 dious. They were further both vexed and alarmed by the
 rection of a French fort immediately over the line. This
 as situated at Beausejours and adjacent to the district of
 Mines, on a narrow isthmus connecting Nowia Scotia with
 he mainland of Canada and seemed significant, as the
 Basin of Mines was the most populous and wealthiest of the
 Acadian settlements. Whatever the real purpose may
 ave been, the fort and its occupancy by the French troops
 as a perpetual menace to the rulers of the province.

The tempest was slowly but surely gathering. But
 ough all the perplexing situations the Acadian people
 ept as much aloof from participation as was possible for
 em to do. Their purpose and intent was to remain true

to their obligations as neutrals, but being flesh and blood and the continued prey of those who by secret persuasion and every possible device, sought to lead them to some measure that would result to the advantage of the Canadian provinces, and through this means to the government of France, what could be expected as the result. With all this they so greatly preferred to till the soil, tend their herds, and live in quietude, that with far fewer exceptions than could be expected they persisted in pursuing their pastoral career.

At last the tempest had gathered its forces; a cloud of ill-omen overcast the sky. The drama of turmoil, of battle, of unrest and changing rulers, was about to terminate in tragedy. The innocents were again to suffer; the only ones that could be by any means accounted guiltless, were to be made the victims of an act that thrills every sensibility of the human heart

The American colonies were in fact a part of England and represented her interests, in precisely the same sense that the Canadian colonies represented their home government.

Through the instrumentality of the former, an expedition was fitted out in 1755 to reduce the fort at Beausejours, the ultimate object being to destroy French influence in Nova Scotia, thus making it practically and really an English province like themselves. The fleet sailed from Boston harbor, and on arrival near their destination were joined by a force of British regulars under Col. Moncton, who took command of the whole. The negotiations with the English government and preparation of the expedition had been conducted with so much care that the occupants of the fortress were surprised at the appearance of the enemy. Their consternation quickly extended to the Acadians who, with

instinctive French predilections, required only a threat from the commandant of the French forces to lead many to cast their fortunes with them. Not knowing what was really involved, believing their all to be in peril at the hands of treacherous freebooters, they accepted the only apparent chance for self-preservation. Rendered desperate by the gloomy outlook, some 300 joined the troops in the fort, the many, being undecided to the last moment what was to do, finally hid their families in the woods and fought the invader from any cover they could find. Heroic but a vain, unavailing, and fruitless effort; the hand of fate was upon them, they struggled against destiny.

The fort surrendered after feeble resistance, and the misguided Acadians were at the mercy of the English who, having granted them neutrality, now found them traitors.

With mock generosity they were pardoned this grave offence, but there awaited them a doom no less grievous. It is at this doom that every sentiment of humanity and common decency revolts, stamping the perpetrators as men worthy the brand of Cain. No claim of precedent, no plea of national policy, can be made to hide the infamy of the deed at which the hearts of all good men revolt. Precedent does not palliate wanton torture, physical or mental, more than it excuses the savage for burning his victim at the stake. The course pursued had not even the manly quality of fair, open dealing, but consisted in a series of schemes, in every one of which a trap was secreted, to the end that in whichever way they might, the intended victims must come at last to the same condition. The purpose was perfectly hidden until the fatal line was passed.

Having been forgiven for joining hands with the enemy in the recent contest at the fort of Beausejours, their hearts were sufficiently softened by the unexpected clemency, to

respond promptly through their representatives that they were willing to take the oath of allegiance to the British crown, a summons having been issued to them to determine the matter as to their willingness. These representatives were however astounded when informed that the old time treaty proviso granting them immunity from bearing arms, and especial religious privileges could no longer be tolerated and would not be permitted. The oath must now be taken in full without proviso or reservation as an evidence of complete abandonment of any former allegiance. This measure was wholly unexpected and to them shocking to the last degree. The agents could not at once answer for their constituency, in fact could do no less than to go back to them for instruction in a matter so vital to their interests. When they returned for further consultation, the trap set at that point was sprung, it was pronounced too late. Accepting the delay as an evidence of unwillingness and incincerity, the oath could not now be taken at all or in any form, and the suppliants were their government's outcasts. Thus step by step the cords were being drawn closer, there having from the beginning no intended method of escape.

Wandering blindly in a desert of doubt, the peasants went on with their harvest labor, without a dream of calamity greater than had so often befallen them, that with it they were familiar as with the face of an old time friend. It was just as well, as neither negligence nor diligence could change their predetermined doom.

The further development and execution of the diabolical plot required great care and secrecy, from fear of a revolt, to quell which would result in slaughter in addition to infamy. Only such delay occurred as was unavoidable. While the husbandmen were occupied at their labors, the

commanding officer was busy perfecting every detail, and issuing the orders of the "Provincial Governor" who represented the British Crown, to his military subordinates, detailing their duty at each of the several French or Acadian settlements. Of these there were several, each one a little world within itself.

These officers, with requisite troops, repairing to the station assigned them, in conformity with their instructions, each issued an order directing, under penalty, that "all old men, young men, and lads of ten years of age," should meet at a place designated, on September 5th, 1755, to hear read a command of the Governor of the province.

On its face this notice was entirely innocent; and in some places was fully and in others not wholly complied with. Possibly some might have noticed that on that morning extraordinary military precautions had been very quietly taken, the strictest discipline observed, and the troops supplied with powder and ball. There could have been nothing beyond a suspicion, as the dread secret was unknown, save to a few trusty officers who were sworn to absolute silence and secrecy.

Grand Pré was a populous and thrifty village, surrounded by charming farms, with fields well tilled and barns overflowing from the recent harvest. A description of what transpired there will suffice for all, as the type was the same, and like agonies wrought everywhere. Col. Winslow, of Massachusetts, was assigned to duty in that district, and to the credit of his heart be it said, shrank from its performance with expressed disgust for being made the instrument of unwanted cruelty, but imperative orders forced him to obedience.

In compliance with official notice, "the old men, young men, and boys of ten years" gathered in the village church

at the appointed time. Few failed to obey the mandate, as suspicion was disarmed among them, and the orders of the Governor were of vital importance. Seated in their places in respectful and painful expectation, they did not notice that the soldiers were quietly surrounding the building.

This done, the ranking officer in full uniform, representing his imperial majesty of Great Britain. after some preliminaries, read the fatal orders, which were nothing less than that their property was confiscated to the Crown, that all were to be removed from the province, leaving behind everything save such personal effects as could conveniently be carried with them, and that after the moment of the reading, they were prisoners, and with their families doomed to perpetual exile. The ax had fallen at Grand Pre, but not with like success at some of the settlements, especially that of Beau Basin and Annapolis, where suspicions had by some means been aroused, and only a portion reported as ordered. The recusants, fleeing from the horror they faintly imagined, hid with their families in the woods, hoping against fate for something better than their fears had painted.

This awful communication, coming like a thunderbolt, so appalled the prisoners that they doubted what they heard, but all became too plain for doubt when they saw the stern sentry at the doors and beyond them the guard under arms. Then their strong hearts bowed under the weight of wretchedness. Instantly passed before them as in a panorama, their homes, their families, and every sacred associated tie suddenly wrenched from them; their fertile fields and well filled barns, their herds grazing on the plains, to them blotted out forever. Anguish rent every heart; they were worse than free outcasts on the face of the earth.

Their families knew nothing of what had transpired, until the expected did not return, when inquiry caught the rumor, and, like the hot and suffocating simoon, the revolting fact spread abroad. Then arose shrieks of agony and lamentation in every home. In frenzy women and children rushed along the streets, wringing their hands in despair. It was the wailing of helpless women for absent loved ones and for crushed hopes in every form—everything near and dear seemed to have been gathered by the hand of death, and amid desolation, lay confined before them.

The picture with all its ghastly seeming was all too real, for means of escape there were none. Lamentations were powerless for relief, shrieks of agony could be answered only by kindred shrieks, while mothers pressed to their breasts babes that like themselves were pinioned to the wheel.

The early imprisonment may be regarded in the light of a precaution to prevent disorder, which, through some mischance might have resulted from delay and arousing of suspicion. At least it was otherwise premature, as there were not at command a sufficient number of vessels to transport the members of the colony which necessitated painful delay. Near the shore at Grand Pre lay five vessels on which it was decided to place the prisoners as a means of security. The 10th of September was fixed upon as the day on which the male captives would be placed on board to be there guarded while awaiting sufficient transportation.

Five long weary days passed by, doubt and hope alternating in the breasts of the imprisoned, and their families still in their homes. Would the captors carry away fathers, husbands, sons and brothers? Limited numbers, under careful guard, had each day been allowed to visit their families; would this blessed favor be taken away, were ques-

tions continually asked and ever answered by a hopeless moan.

Each circling sun sternly reduced the hours of stay, and when on the designated morn, its light set all their beautiful land in glory before them, the drums were resounding in the village streets. At eight o'clock the church bell tolled into the desolate hearts that the fatal hour had come.

The melancholy column was formed and 260 young men, in the advance, ordered to march on ship-board. The pride and strength of their manly hearts forbade obedience. They asked only for their families in company. With them they could bow to the yoke, but to leave them they would not. This could not be, and while drums resounded the soldiery advanced with fixed bayonets. Appeals were vain, to resist with empty hands utterly hopeless. A few were wounded, when in despair the march began.

From the church to the shore, the way was lined with women and children, mothers, wives, babes, those who tottered from age, and those whose cheeks were pallid with the touch of death. Neither pen nor pencil can picture a heart agony, nor can they portray the fierce sorrows of those who knelt by the way, greeting the prisoners with blessings, tears and lamentations, as they bade, as they yet fully believed, a final adieu. Trembling hand clasped hand that trembled, fathers for a moment only pressed their lips to those of wife and child as they moved on under the eyes of the stern guards, who dare not even if they wished brook the least delay. Thus all moved quickly along the melancholy path until none were left but those who mourned, and when from the vessel decks the imprisoned looked ashore, there stood their loved ones gazing through blinding tears to catch even a faint glimpse of those so

cruelly wrenched from them. Riveted to the spot, the desolate women and children wrung their hands and wept until "tired nature" and the gloom of nightfall forced them to seek protection in their homes.

One act in this infamous drama had been completed, an act that brought shame into the English hearts, who under orders were compelled to its execution.

There is a form of mercy in the ending of torture, but even this trifling boon was not for the unfortunate Acadians, for through long weeks of waiting for additional transports and supplies they lay in full view of their lost treasures.

Horrified beyond measure, utterly powerless, incapable of thinking this cold inhumanity could be more than temporary, the women felt that the persecutors must relent; that the iron heart would soften, the relentless hand loose its hold and the imprisoned be returned to them. Soothed with this "forlorn hope," they turned their attention to their varied duties, each day, by permission, carrying food from their tables to those on board the ships.

But the end was not yet. The event of September 10th was that of separation; that which was to follow was one of union, but not at the family fireside.

Again the drums beat, troops paraded under arms, and dividing into squads, proceeded to the performance of the last act of the cruel tragedy. The labor of the housewife, the play of Acadian children in Acadia, was ended. For the last time had been heard there their lullaby, for the last time the prattle of their babes. The order was imperative, the fatal hour of embarkation had arrived, mothers, wives and children must now join their imprisoned friends, not definitely as families, but as chance might determine. With this awful reality, the last hope was

crushed and horror thrilled every heart. In bewildering grief and terror, almost unconscious of what they did, some prized treasures were gathered together. Still reluctant to go, the soldiery were compelled to force their departure, and amid tears hot with agony, mothers carried their children, friends bore the aged and infirm in melancholy procession to the boats that were to bear them to the vessels awaiting them near the shore. At each of the villages the same blood chilling scenes were enacted, and then fire swept away homes, churches and harvests before their eyes. Flames burst through windows, crept over roofs, houses and barns melted like wax, while each stack of grain became a huge cone of smoke, streaked with fire, until nothing remained but a cloud that hung like a pall above the cinders that smouldered beneath. The exiles could only gaze, wring their powerless hands and weep.

In every locality the effort at capture had been well planned, and was executed thoroughly, both at the time of reading the order and afterward; the search for those who failed to come being pushed with earnest diligence. Still there were some who, with their families, escaped to the woods. In the utmost fright and destitution they hid them as best they could, to bide the developments of time. No opportunity for counter effort was discovered by them save at Chipody, where, from their hiding places, they saw the flames bursting simultaneously from their houses, barns and churches. Instantly their blood became heated beyond endurance. Guided by anger, and thirsting for revenge, they hastily hid their wives and children more securely, and few as they were, threw themselves unexpectedly on the enemy, who, broken by the furious attack, hastened to their ships, leaving forty-five dead and wounded on the field.

Whichever way they turned, the fate of these fugitives could be nothing less than deplorable to the utmost extreme. Their English persecutors were unrelenting and sought them out in the most unfrequented places. Those that, by dint of watchfulness, suffering and dubious good fortune escaped, either hid in rocky caverns, fens, or marshes, subsisting by fishing and kindred methods, or joined their comrades who had united with the French before the battle at the fort, and shared with them their flinty destiny. Others found refuge in the wigwams of their savage friends, or wandered to adjacent islands within the French borders, still hovering near their lost treasures. Detached groups found their way into the interior of the Canadian settlements, to receive such care as is meted out to the impoverished and disconsolate. Through some chance, a group of these people fixed their habitations on the Madawaska, where, having passed through indescribable privations, they gradually developed comforts, which, in time, ripened into prosperity and happiness, and there, at this day, may be found an untarnished type of the Acadian people.

Little bands found resting places within the provincial borders, at points remote from English settlements, their security consisting in their poverty and the unfrequented locality of their homes.

In 1763 the iron grip of the British hand slightly yielded its grasp, permission being then granted to the ex-patriated to return and establish themselves in Digby County, Township Clare, a rough and jagged place on the southwest shore of St. Marys bay, remote from all habitation and accessible only from the sea through a narrow and rock-bound inlet. A few promptly availed themselves of this meagre indulgence. Long deprivation and suffering seemed to have softened their memory of wrongs and lent energy

to their efforts. Labor for themselves had in it such pleasurable quality that soon the rough lands were made to yield their treasures, which, with ample facilities for fishing, enabled them to secure life's necessities, now to them the sweetest luxuries.

This experience is sufficiently heartrending, but is, if possible, surpassed by those who, as the transports glided down the bay, gazed their last on their native lands as the flames shot upwards through the dense clouds of smoke. No fleet had ever borne on its decks such burthen of heart-breaking, decks that were moistened with torrents of tears. No desolation can be more dreary than the transition from home to homelessness; from loved land to one which at best had no allurements, that could only be a place for wandering and servitude; from the cheers of the family fireside to a bleak and dreary desert.

But grief will often exhaust itself and yield at last to passion, or mingled together they find expression by turns. Thus it was on one of these vessels, resulting in mutiny, overpowering the guards, and running it ashore near St. John's river, the escaped prisoners finding refuge in friendly wigwams.

The fleet sped on its way, each vessel consigned by orders to certain of the colonies along the Atlantic coast, where their living freight was heartlessly set on shore, among those whose language was not understood, and each to the other odious by long hostility, and where the faith of each was deemed by the other a heresy, a wicked and unclean thing.

Imagination alone can follow their devious fortunes, as history has not preserved its details, more than at the hands of those so intensely disliked, they secured greater favors and more real kindness than did the refugees at the hands

of their Canadian friends. But it was not possible to comfort them. Wherever they might find refuge among the colonists unhappiness was still their portion. If they had few wants they were keenly felt and could not be yielded; every tradition being a sacred thing to which their very souls were attached as by hooks of steel. Their unrest, consequently, never appeased, necessarily separated, they soon scattered far and wide in well nigh aimless purpose, some in after years working their way back to Digby and Madawaska. Others were sent from Virginia to England or found refuge in the Norman land of their forefathers.

No legend tells us how or when a portion of these strangely unfortunate people reached Louisiana. The long stretch of inhospitable wilderness forbade a journey thither by land, but it may be readily surmised that some kind hearted Captain took them by sea to the then far away colony, where they could once more hear in speech the music of their native tongue.

Fancy will paint how memory of the harsh and forbidding clime they had left behind, together with their suffering and poverty must have vanished from their minds, as they slowly wended their way out of the tropical Gulf into beautiful Berwick Bay, and thence into Bayou Teche (Bio Tesh) extending northward two hundred miles, to receive the silent flowing Atchafalaya (A-shafala). We dwell with them on the scene. There is not a ripple on the sleeping Bayou, a deep waterway from two to three hundred feet wide, that, like a ribbon of silver, stretches far, far away; on the eastern shore, standing then as now, an unbroken forest of cotton-wood and cypress, their lofty branches interlacing, all draped and festooned with Spanish moss as if in sorrow that the waters into which their shadows fell, must pass away to return no more. On the western

shore their eyes were greeted with charming undulations, where the live oak spread its branches and the palmetto rose in pretentious dignity, where roses, magnolias, jessamine, camelias and oleanders, of spontaneous growth, loaded the air with intoxicating perfume, seeming to offer a paradise where the rudest must long to linger and from which the blest could scarce wish to wander. Far up the stream, on the billowy lands, the exiles established a colony, in which the gentle souled Evangeline sought her lost lover; where the habits of their ancestors becoming firmly rooted, are still untarnished; where the spinning wheel and loom are heard in the cabin home, where the girls wear the Norman bonnet and petticoat, where the village cure is their guide and master, and the church bells call to that form of devotion from which they have never swerved.

The shameless work was done; the expatriation made as complete as it was possible to do, by resort to the most frigid heartlessness and rugged violence. Nine thousand persons had been made empoverished wanderers on the face of the earth, and their vast wealth at the same time given to the winds and the flames.

Families had necessarily been separated, never to be reunited, save by such chance accident as could rarely occur. Fancy alone can picture the joy of such unexpected meeting, and none could be more touching than the story of the lovers kindly handed down to us by authentic history.

They were to have wed on the very day on which the male inhabitants of Grand Pre were made prisoners. On his way to the ship Jean stopped to kiss the kneeling, weeping maiden and hurriedly said, "Adelle, trust in God and all will be well." On different vessels both were landed

in New York, and the maiden, with her mother, found a home far up the Hudson, from which the former was carried away in an Indian raid and made the petted prisoner of a chief in the deep forest recesses of the Mohawk Valley.

In time Jean became a trader with the Indians, and, in one of his long journeys, one day "approached the wigwam of the old chief, and, amid the forest shadows, saw a young woman, with her back toward him, as she sat on a mat, feathering arrows. On her head sat jauntily a French cap. With this, her fair neck suggested her nativity. He approached her gently—their eyes met. The maiden sprang from the mat, and uttering a wild cry of joy and 'Jean,' fell fainting in his arms."

Poetry and romance have vied with history in portrayal of the pitiable experience of this people, who left France with hope of bettering their lives in the rugged wilderness of a far away and unknown land.

Strangely enough its history presents the elements of romance, and poetry and story can scarce reach beyond the real limits of cheerless history.

A rugged land, an unostentatious people, ever on the rack of misfortune, but never swerving from the habits and faith of their fathers, Acadia has been made by the poet's magic pen the land of Evangeline, and she, the pure souled, the patient, ever loving and ever faithful, the representative of her people, whose cup was always well-nigh filled with bitterness, but who, like her:

"Meekly bowed their heads, and murmured.
Father, I thank Thee."

THE END.



COSTUMES OF THE ACADIANS.



BANISHMENT

AND

REMOVAL OF THE ACADIANS

—BY—

Madame MOREL DE LA DURANTAYE.



Banishment and Removal of the Acadians.

In 1740, difficulties between France and England, in consequence of court-intrigues, kindled a needless war which terminated in the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. The details of the treaty exhibited, on the part of the French ministers, such neglect and unpardonable ignorance that a new war began very soon after, on the borders of Acadia. The governor of Canada placed garrisons along the frontiers and the peace heretofore enjoyed by the Acadians ceased to exist.

In 1755, the envy which the prosperity and rich soil of the colony had excited among the militia of New-England brought on this infamous and cruel spoliation, an eternal stain on the name and honor of England, which, unfortunately, is without more than one parallel in the history of that nation. This iniquitous decision was carefully concealed from the Acadians, in order not to provoke a suspicion that might have proved dangerous. A proclamation was issued calling on the people to assemble on the 5th of September, 1755, in their different parishes to hear an important communication from the governor. This deceit was not everywhere successful. At Beau-Bassin, part of what had remained of the French Acadian population took at once to the woods. The people of Annapolis, accustomed of old to seek, in the forests, a refuge against the cruelties of war, did not wait for the completion of this horrible

catastrophe, therefore a certain number only fell into the hands of their foes.

But in the district of Mines, which is the wealthiest in Acadia, good care had been taken to secure the success of the plot. This population, peaceful, industrious and not as suspicious perhaps, responded in a body to the call of the governor, and being secretly surrounded by soldiery, were told they were prisoners of war, and their lands, tenements and household goods forfeited to the crown, and that on the 10th of September, they were to embark for the British Colonies.

This awful communication fell like a thunderbolt and stunned the wretched families. Without arms, surrounded by soldiers and crushed beneath calamity, the Acadians had to bow to the atrocious law of a triumphant foe; and on the 10th of September, the mournful expatriation took place.

That date had been fixed upon as the day of departure; and a man of war was in waiting for them. At day break, drums were resounding in the villages, and at eight o'clock the ringing of the church bells told the sad and desolate Frenchmen that the time had come for them to leave forever their native land. Soldiers entered the houses and turned away men, women and children into the market place. 'Till then each family had remained together, and a silent sadness prevailed; but when the drums beat to embark; when the time had come to leave their native home for ever, to part with mother, relatives, friends, without hope of seeing them again, to follow strangers that enmity, language, habits and especially religion had made distasteful, crushed beneath the weight of their misery, the exiles melted into tears and rushed into each others arms in a long and last embrace. The drums were resounding

incessantly and the crowd was pushed on toward the ships anchored in the river. Two hundred and sixty young men were ordered to embark on board the first vessel. This they refused to do, declaring they would not leave their parents but were willing to embark with their families. Their request was immediately rejected, but they were forced into subjection by the troops, who, with fixed bayonets, advanced toward them, and those who tried to resist were wounded, leaving no alternative, but to submit to this horrible tyranny. The road leading from the church to the shore was crowded with women and children, who, on their knees, greeted them with tears and their blessings, as they passed, bidding a sad adieu to husband or son, and extending to them trembling hands, which they sometimes could press in theirs, but which a brutal soldier compelled soon to be released. The young men were followed by their seniors, who passed through the same scene of sorrow and distress. In this manner were the whole male population put on board of the five transports stationed in the river; each of these were guarded by six officers and eighty privates. As soon as other vessels arrived, the women and children were put aboard, and when at sea, the soldiers would sing, unmindful of such dreary misfortune. The tears of these poor wretched people excited their cruelty and even they had a good deal to suffer at the hands of the officers.

Revenge, mean cruelty, implacable cupidity, and every contemptible passion concurs to increase the infamy of this odious removal and brand it as one of the most shameful pages of English history.

For several consecutive evenings, the cattle would congregate around the smoking ruins of the homes, as if expecting the return of their owners, while the

faithful watchdogs were howling on the deserted hearths.

According to the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of 1831, the number of prisoners thus removed in the district of Mines amounted to 4,000, and it may be said that the whole French population had been banished, as very few could escape.

From the following statement may be obtained an idea of the wealth of that country. Four thousand houses and five thousand stables were burned; twelve thousand oxen, three thousand cows, five thousand calves, six thousand horses, twelve thousand sheep and eight hundred pigs were taken possession of.

The American colonists, who had long since provoked the measures, obtained a grant of the land, and of course the numerous herds were not without profit to some one; so, nothing had been neglected to succeed in that canton, which was the wealthiest of all.

How did these poor people live in the forests and wilderness? through what succession of dangers and sufferings did they pass in the presence of speculators among whom their lands were divided? This we do not know. But we are aware that they felt the pangs of hunger and cold and defended their lives against wild beasts.

At the present time we find a small parish of Acadian origin, growing on the ruins of their country, in the midst of British invaders. The population are French Acadians and Catholics in every principle and remains as an unconquerable protest of justice. They are the inhabitants who, escaping from British persecution, took refuge in the woods, and later emigrated into several localities of St. Lawrence.

In 1755, the French commanding officer stationed himself at Beausejour with a small garrison of one hundred

and fifty men, where they watched the movements of the English, who, later on, took the fort by a surprise. The women and children were able to escape and hide away in the woods; who were soon after joined by the commander with a few armed men. When they saw the flames destroying their houses, the blood of the old Acadians swelled in their veins, and they listened only to anger and revenge. They sent their wives and children into the woods and threw themselves suddenly on the enemies, who, broken by the furious and unexpected attack, returned to their ships, leaving forty-five of their comrades dead or wounded. After this dreadful slaughter, the French officer apportioned, to the best of his ability, the few remaining families, sending some to the islands of the Gulf, while others, loth to leave, began again to clear the woods along the shores; but the majority of those established on the shores had to take refuge in Canada.

In 1757, there remained on the borders of the Gulf of the St. Lawrence, but very few families, being unobserved because of their small number and the remoteness of English settlements. The usual poverty of an uninhabited country made it anything but a desirable location.

As to the fate of the people dwelling along the river of Annapolis, they threw themselves in the woods at the first suspicion; for they had for some time been accustomed to such tactics; but this time, it was not a passing storm after which they could return to their fields and rebuild their wooden houses. The English levied on them a lasting war. One portion of the people of Annapolis were obliged to take refuge in forests and deserts, with the savages, while others scattered along the shores, where, poor and unnoticed, they earned their living as Acadian fishermen. There, for several years, they succeeded in conceal-

ing their existence amid anxieties and privations, hiding carefully their small canoes, not daring to till the land, watching, with apprehension, any English sail, and dividing with their friends, the Indians, the supplies due to fishing and hunting.

The woodland remains yet, but to-day, under its shade, lives a race different in customs and language. It is only on the dreary and misty shores of the Atlantic that vegetate yet a few Acadian peasants, whose fathers came back from exile to die in their native land. In their cabin, the spinning wheel and the loom are yet in motion. The young girls still wear the Norman bonnet and petticoat, and in the evening, sitting near the fire, they repeat the history of the Gospel, while in its rocky caverns, near by, the ocean roars and answers in a disconsolate tune to the groans of the forest.

Since then, like the passing of a terrible storm leaving wreck and ruin in its track, the persecution subsided, the Acadians made use of a kind of sufferance to establish themselves openly on the shores that had been their refuge for so many years. A few years after, they were joined in these solitary and wretched parts of the country by a small fraction of those transported by the English in 1755. Such is the origin of the Acadian population in Canada, that has given its name to the parish called Acadia, in the county of St. John, a place made immortal by the beautiful poem of Longfellow, and is known as the home of Evangeline.

A memorial of the Bishop of Quebec, dated October 30th, 1757, let us know their number, especially at Cape Sable, where a Catholic Missionary comforted and sustained them against English persecutions; this missionary had been called by them, and offered to defray his own expenses.

A certain number still remained scattered in different places living miserably in the remotest cantons.

In 1763, permission was granted to Acadians that had been transported into Massachusetts to establish themselves on the south-west shore of their old country, near St. Mary's Bay.

The township of Clare, Digby county, was at the time a rough and jagged place, remote from all habitation and accessible only by sea. The Acadians, who seem to possess as an essential characteristic, a constant energy and indomitable perseverance, were ready to recommence the struggle and work without loss of courage. They were not long in putting their shoulder to the wheel when the said inheritance, granted them by the compassion of their oppressors, came back into their hands. Industrious, hard-workers, they soon cleared the land, built fishing boats, and created in this deserted country, a sufficient thrift. All the authors are in accordance in their testimony as to the preservation of the language, national character and vigilance to maintain old customs.

Mr. Halliburton, judge in Nova Scotia, has written the following in 1829: "While Germans have a tendency to disappear in the English population, the Acadians live together as much as possible, keeping their religion, language and peculiar customs. They never intermarry with their protestant neighbors. Among themselves they speak but French."

PART SECOND.

France has been, till the middle of the last century, one of the greatest colonial powers in the world. The moment seems propitious to present to the public the researches we publish here. It is sad, indeed, in exhibiting

the national character, to call back the painful end of efforts which, at their beginning, raised so legitimate and bright hopes; but we must overcome the natural repulsion generated by misfortune, and fix our minds on these sad recollections of the past, to derive from our disasters, useful information to guide and strengthen our conduct in the future. We know that it is not without concern for us to follow the French people, abandoned in our old possessions, and to show what has become of their posterity, through the difficulties and trials of a foreign domination. France seems to have forgotten, that in the dark hours of her history, important populations of her own blood, and in spite of misfortune, faithful to their origin, were forsaken by her. Who remembers *to-day* Acadia, Canada, Louisiana or even Mauritius, though so recently lost? Who has any recollection of places illustrated by so many heroic fights, and the devoted patriotism of their inhabitants? It is hard to awaken remembrances of our past glory, and to point out that France has been the first to commence this wonderful development of civilization in North America, while losing, through her carelessness, the generous children she did not know how to defend.

Courageous colonists, who with energetic perseverance, have faced persecutions and abandonment, you have kept everywhere, not only the tradition, but also the religion, customs, language and love of your country. Has not the time arrived to depart from that selfish indifference with which we rewarded their affection? Those to whom the greatness and prospects of France are yet worthy of consideration will understand that to call attention to the national question is to attend to the future eventually laid up for the French race.

ACADIAN RECOLLECTIONS

-BY-

Madame MOREL DE LA DURANTAYE.



ACADIAN RECOLLECTIONS.

The writer of this, being a descendant of the Acadian exiles, ventures to offer a contribution to their sad history, partly derived from records and partly from impressions made by recitals of those among whom she was reared. It is true that those who made the terrible journey through the wilderness had been gathered by death before my birth, but I well remember seeing and conversing with their children, born after their departure from their original homes, some on board the vessels that carried them to the English colonies, others in the forests during their wanderings in search of a place to rest.

Some of these people, then very old, had been nursed by their mothers all through the long weary way, as in terror they fled they knew not where.


The sorrowful stories were so burned into my young heart, that in my after-journeyings through the provinces, I have eagerly listened to repetitions by their descendants, who tell, with touching pathos, the incidents handed down in families, from generation to generation. The length of time that has elapsed makes it impossible to now give primitive exactitude, and therefore this record must bear somewhat the form of legends of my native village, where my story begins.

Going backward more than a century, eastern Canada was a trackless wilderness. It was 1755 or 1756 when a few families were seen wending their way through it; all victims of the same misfortune, who, for some cause now

unknown, halted on the banks of the Montreal river, and decided that they were now sufficiently hidden and might venture to there establish a home.

It was a curious but not unnatural fancy, that the exiles usually named any new place they might decide to occupy, after some one that was dear to them in the land from which they had been expelled.

This group had found a spot where they determined to begin anew the struggle of life, to try once more what unremitting toil might bring forth, and named it Little Acadia—after their lost country. Thus began a little colony, toward which other fugitives, as if by instinct, worked their weary way. The scenes then occurring there would soften the flintiest heart. The poor unfortunates arrived, one after another, in straggling groups and wholly destitute, seeming like parts of a wreck after a storm, drifted by the winds to the same shore. Fathers, with large families came, accompanied, perhaps, by some of their neighbors. Often poor young girls lived through the journey, while their aged parents died by the way from hardship and starvation, finding their last rest in the gloomy forest. Groups of these wanderers were often partly or wholly lost in the wilderness to be seen no more. The survivors, filled with grief for those that had disappeared by the way, and embittered toward those who had caused their misery, could but recount the painful story and weep. Occasionally an old mother, whose love for her children was great enough to surmount every obstacle and bear with all the hardships of the journey, would finally reach the place that was to witness the last sacrifice of her life. In her dying hour, she might be heard asking God to bless all the poor exiles around her, and then, in a way so innocent and pure that you would know they were the last wish of a



loving mother's heart, hear her cry, my children, where are they? Alas! God only knows, but if any of you ever see them, tell them that their old mother died, blessed them, and asking God to bless and protect them from the tyranny of the English, and at last to forgive them.

In pain and poverty, sighs and tears, thus was Little Acadia begun, and in the midst of these humble unfortunates, in the fields close by a cottage, the erection of which was just commenced, my father was born; and in that same little colony I first saw the light of day.

This constitutes but the means of insight into the multitude of oft-told experience, of trials and sufferings that had seared the souls of the exiles, had prepared their soil for the growth of the tares of hate, that to this day flourish in luxuriance.

From it we naturally turn to the causes that so crushed this people, as if beneath a heel shod with iron.

In the province now known as Nova Scotia, at an early day lived a people whose land was known to them and the world as Acadia. They were all French and lived in distinct settlements, somewhat widely scattered. One of these was known at the time as Port Royal, which was captured by the English in 1710, and then named Annapolis, by which title that colony was ever afterward designated. It is to the people of this colony that this sketch is chiefly devoted, as my ancestry were among those who escaped from it, as well as many of those with whom I spent my early years, and from whom I received the early and lasting impressions.

Port Royal was the most valuable point owned by the French in America. In 1711 all the Acadian Peninsula suffered the fate of Port Royal. The French abandoned it by a treaty in 1714.

Acadia thus passed under the English cepter, and so remained for nearly fifty years, when Nicholson, Governor of the Province, issued an order compelling the inhabitants to come before September 5th, 1755, and show submission to the English crown by taking an oath, or forfeit their rights as English citizens. This they had before been required to do under direction of Phillips, who then represented the English Government, and who granted them the rights of citizens without being required to bear arms, and permitting them freedom to worship as they chose, and that this should be perpetual. The Acadians reminded Governor Nicholson of the promise of Phillips and the reserve he had granted in the oath required of them. They also reminded him of the cruelty of requiring them to fight against their own people, man to man, but received in answer that Phillips had been censured by the King for the rash promises he had made, and that they must now submit to the King. There had been deceit in politics in order to keep them there against their own will, and the result of this hideous crime could have but one result.

The Acadians asked if in case they desired to leave the country, they would be allowed to dispose of their property. They were then informed that they could not either sell their property or leave the country. They then returned to their fireside, some in despair, others waiting in hopes, but not one would swear allegiance to England and raise his arm against France. Then began the tyranny of the English administration; then those poor but heroic people by stealth left their native home, carrying nothing with them but their hatred for their persecutors. They left one after another, men and women holding on their arms their aged fathers and mothers. Their conversations were held in low tones and ceased entirely on the threshold,

the head of the family first, then followed all the representatives of a third generation, each with a load of some kind. The procession started silently through the darkness to the harbor, where lay the ship awaiting their embarkation and transfer to the Canadian shore.

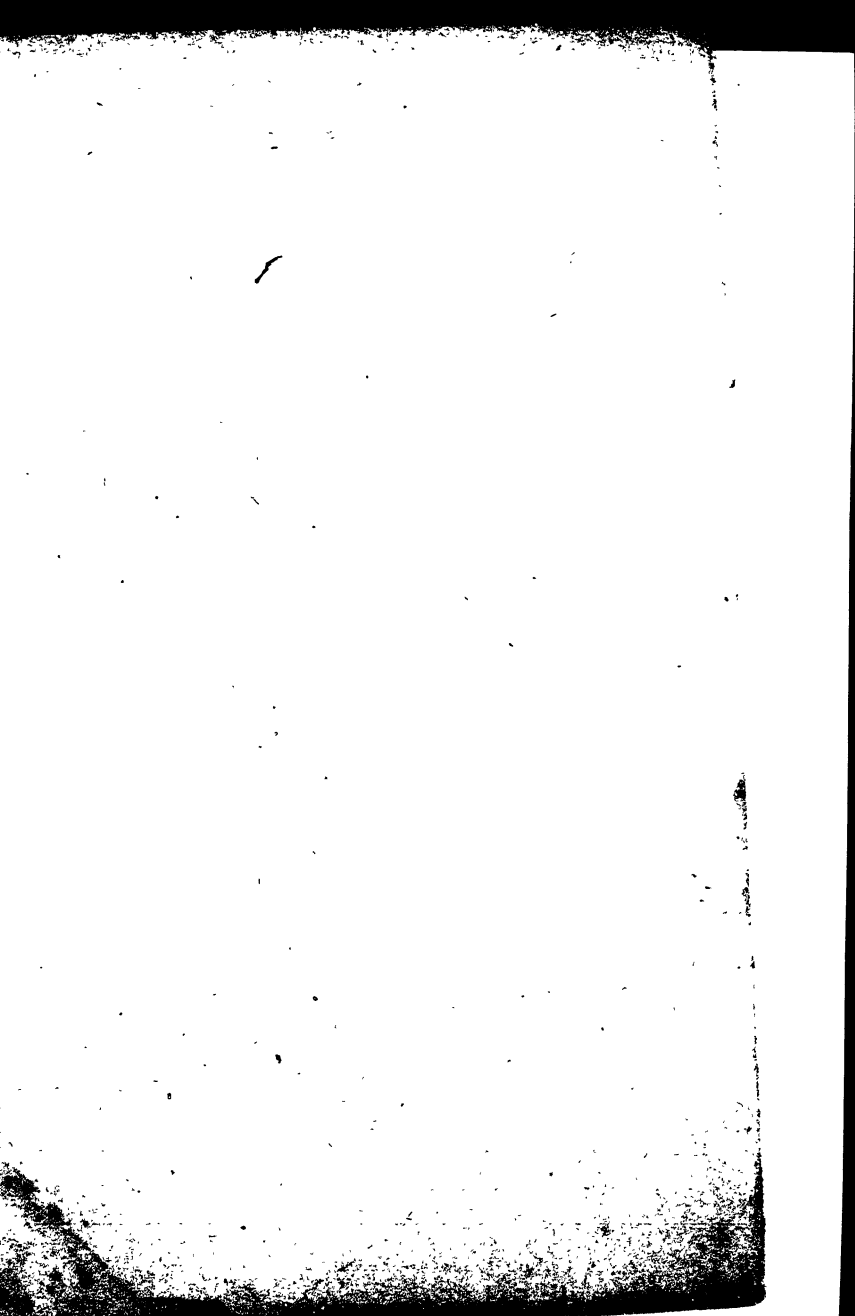
They left, unnoticed by anyone, as they feared arousing the authorities who were already on the alert. Arrived upon the beach amidst darkness, and blinded with tears, there was of course some confusion, people could be heard in low voices calling one another, and sailors letting go their lines, but soon all noise ceased. Occasionally you would hear a few between their sobs bidding good-bye to their country, never to return. The anguish was general, even little babes woke from sleep and cried, as a cold breeze would pass over their face; they knew it was not their mother's caressing breath. The boat began to rock; they felt it was not the rocking of their cradle, and theirs were the last cries borne back to Acadia.

Go now, you barbarous instrument of politics; go and distribute on other shores your mission of tyranny and outrage. Hidden in the forests, on the beaches, and in the midst of solitude are your victims. Do not flatter yourself with the hope that their voices are silenced forever; that their footsteps will never again return to their native soil; that their stories will never reach the ears of the civilized world; that God and the world will leave them eternally without justice, and that you will continue your reign of destruction without punishment. No! the voice of these children shall not be hushed; it will outlive these courts upheld by the tears and sufferings of a nation, rocked in the cradle of their misery and cries of anguish. Go, ye tyrants; the calumny will fall upon your memory and follow you to your tombs.

A MIDNIGHT POEM.

While writing at midnight with four in the room,
 My brain as the morning dawned weighing:
 With thoughts of the little one now left alone,
 And their grief my mind was portraying—
 Bereft to-night of their kind father
 Sorrow comes to young and old;
 I was thinking of the daylight
 And the news which must be told,
 When with daylight they'd awaken
 And with one accord all rush
 For the first fond kiss from papa,
 And I—how sad—their hearts must crush!

Yes, to his eternal rest he is gone forever,
 From the ones who loved him well,
 Who will forget him never—
 Shall we ever meet again?
 Yes, the splendor will be greater,
 For when we meet, 'twill be above
 And there see our Creator!
 We can no longer watch and mourn
 For him—the loved one,
 Whose life on earth to us was but a charm,
 We can but hope that his soul will be
 As welcome in heaven,
 As the parting was sad for me.
 When we four will have passed away
 Will some one remember us,
 And will the remembrance be as sad
 As the one who has gone to-day.
 Will we be remembered
 By friends once near and dear;
 Or will we be forgotten,
 As though we never had been here.
 Memory, sad memory,
 With aching heart so sore
 Comes sorrowing and sorrowing
 Alike to rich and poor;
 Though his image I will always keep,
 Defy years to efface;
 'Twill keep my pathway clear and bright
 And in heaven I may also find
 The true and only light.





THE EXILE OF THE ACADIANS.

