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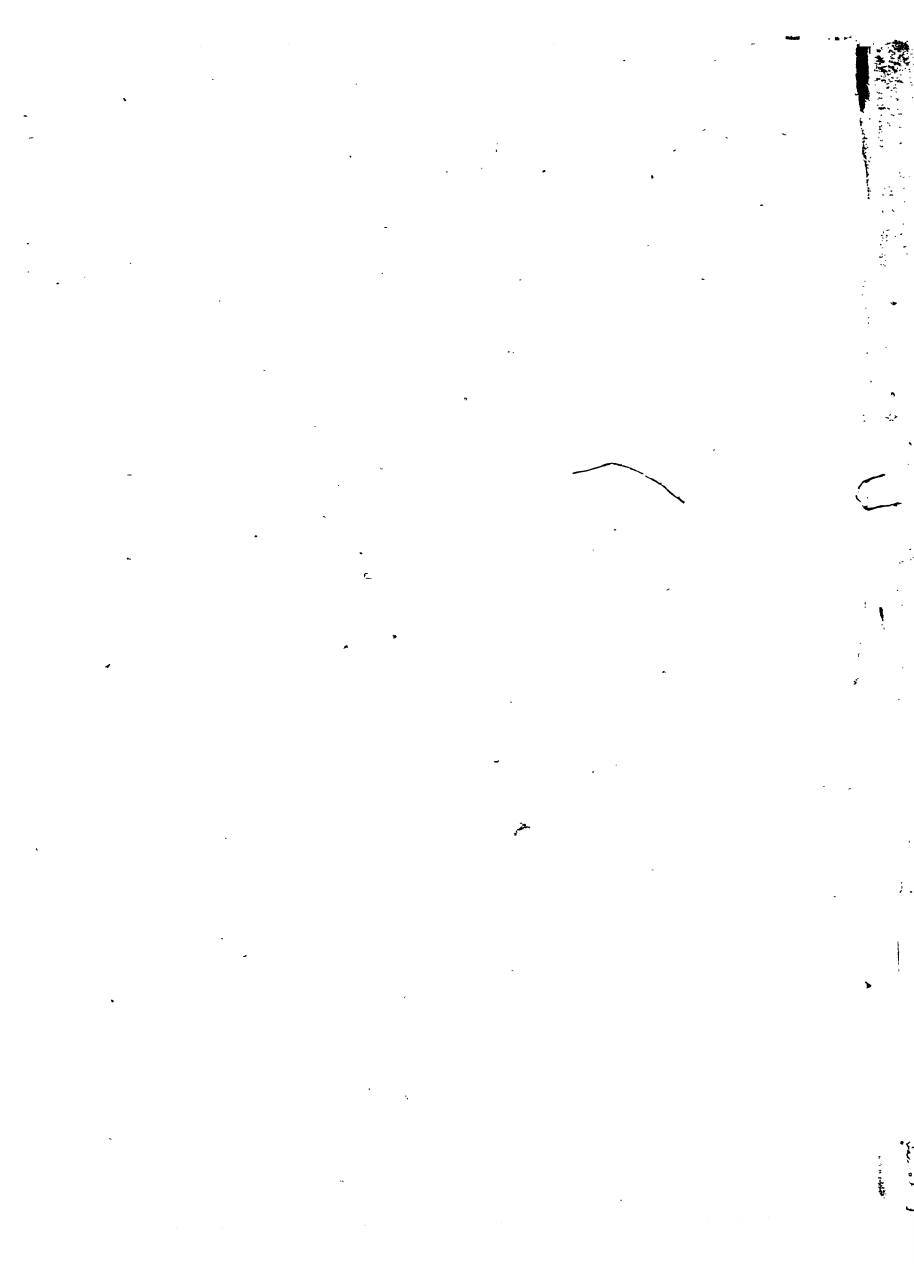
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A VISIT
TO THE
HOME
OF
EVANGELINE.

HISTORICAL ROMANCE OF THE
ACADIANS.

BY

MDE. MOREL DE LA DURANTAYE.

DETROIT:
THE WILTON-SMITH CO.
1892.

E. Fauteux

1900

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BIBLIOTHÈQUE FAUTEUX

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“Loin d’aimer la guerre il l’abhorre
En triomphant meme il deplore
Les desastres qu’elle produit.
Et couronne par la victoire,
Il gemit de sa propre gloire
Si la paix n’en ai pas le fruit.”

INTRODUCTORY.

My Dear Friend—I hear you have returned from your pilgrimage to the Maritime Provinces, and that you were at Grand Pre the anniversary day of the mournful expatriation of those poor Acadians. How great would have been my pleasure could I have shared the deep emotion you must have experienced in visiting this beautiful village, as also the church and cemetery, from which these unfortunate people were banished, and at the sword's point compelled to follow the road to exile!

Permit me to learn from your pen what of the past now remains of our poor Acadia? What ruins still stand of the once beautiful and ancient Port Royal, and also of the forts Beausejours and Beau Basin?

I remain in anticipation,

Your grateful friend,

G.

Very Dear Friend—You write me as though I had returned from Acadia, my hands filled with archaeological spoils. Do not deceive yourself. In visiting Acadia, I obeyed a request addressed me by His Honor the Mayor and the Aldermen of Montreal to kindly interest myself in a charitable cause, and to go where fancy directed me in the interest of my work. Therefore, in tracing my itinerary, it is not surprising that I should remember the home of my ancestors; for it is among those who have suffered that we must seek and receive tender sympathies.

Although my journey to the Maritime Provinces has been a mission of charity, I have not, however, been able to traverse this ground—watered with the tears, and immortalized by the ineffectual despair

of so many brave French, consigned to extermination as a populace—without the powerful remembrance of the past taking possession of my senses and filling them with the melancholy drama now forgotten!

Yes, I visited the cemetery and saw the tombs, though time has effaced the names they once bore and there I drank long draughts from the chalice of memory.

You desire to know what impressions I received and to read the notes gathered so hurriedly in the course of this busy pilgrimage. I yield to your desire, and will simply copy what I have already written; this recital will necessarily be disengaged from all elegance of style, but I do not think the artifices of rhetoric will be required to captivate, impress and interest you; it is with confidence, therefore, that I give complete liberty to my inexperienced pen.

This report will be divided into two parts; the first will treat on the merits of the Acadian character, and the second, on the expulsion of the Acadians, substantiated by documents which are unpublished, and from authentic and historical data in the possession of the writer.

THE ACADIANS.

Departure from Montreal.

CHAPTER I.

On the 1st day of September, at eight o'clock in the morning, I left Montreal. I do not recall the writer who said there is no pleasure so sad as that of parting.

"Parting is such sweet sorrow."

I know that this is true and false at the same time. Nothing is truer if the traveler has no object in view, and is simply going through the world like the Wandering Jew; he may change his residence never so often, he will always find that, as Boileau says, "Weariness mounts in the same saddle and gallops with him, or takes passage in the same conveyance and travels by his side!"

Quite different with the traveler who has an object to attain, the monotony of the journey is dispersed by the activity of thought, in planning and viewing the result of a successful journey. Although I was going on a mission of charity, my journey was nevertheless charming, and my ardent desire to revisit the home of my ancestors caused an anxious longing for a speedy arrival at my destination.

I traveled all through the Maritime Provinces, and at every door I knocked, I am pleased to say, I was made welcome with a hearty hand shake. although in many places I am sure I received the last

spare farthing the home possessed! "You come from Canada, madame?" many have said to me. "We love them dearly, the Canadians, because they are like us French." I was profoundly touched and moved by these few words which bespoke the tenderness and loyalty of the Acadian heart; and I can never forget the kindly generosity of the Bishops of Portland, Halifax, New Brunswick and Charlestown, as also those good priests who had only to speak the word to their parishioners and their purses outpoured liberal contributions.

I had much reason to count on the generosity of the Acadians, and will always remember with gratitude these dear people who have remained so faithful and patriotic.

Origin of the Acadians.

CHAPTER II.

Of the many who have read Longfellow's "Evangeline," how few there are who fully realize that the poet's pathetic Acadia is but the picture of a sensitive people, portraying 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 an unknown wilderness, its solitude unbroken save by the few English colonies on the Atlantic shore of what is now the United States, and the French settlements in Canada; each claiming that which belonged to neither, and each fiercely jealous of the other.

Thus the two most powerful nations of Europe sought extension of dominion, and addition of wealth, while colonists of all classes from various quarters, 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 to them 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, the past has shown little certainty of tenure of possession, and that the imperious English so deemed it is amply shown in the fact that the treaty by which it was secured to them contained the to them galling proviso that their new subjects, the Acadians, or French citizens of Nova Scotia, might enjoy freedom of worship, being Catholics, while the English government was intensely Protestant, and still more, they were granted immunity from military service, being thus permitted to enjoy the benefits of a government, and be in it protected, without being compelled to raise 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 battle against personal friends and relatives; but, odious as this tacit citizenship must have been to the haughty English government, it must in justice be

stated that the treaty was faithfully kept. It seems strange that the well-known vicissitudes and turmoil did not act as a bar to emigration. During each period in which France held the territory her people with consummate pertinacity established homes in Acadia. The English with equal blindness occupying New Scotland during their time of possession.

This seems all the more surprising, when the fact is recalled, that the various changes in mastery, so briefly noted, were always the result of bloody and harassing struggles, participated in by both French and English regular troops, the militia or citizen soldier of both sides, in every case each party being aided by the bloodthirsty Indians, who spared neither age nor 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 history of the part taken by either party in these fierce contests for empire; contests which excited the deepest concern in the great capitals and courts of Europe three thousand miles away.

The Acadians not only brought with them the habits of the Norman peasant, but adhered to their peculiarities with unyielding tenacity.

The French spirit, always gay, always quick to act, prompt at repartee had preserved itself among the Acadians, though they had no other instructions than the solid principles of christianity. Moderate in their tastes, simple in their habits, they had few wants, and were contented with their fate. In consequence they became noted for their patient and persistent toil, for their devotion to the religion of their fathers and an ardent pride in their fatherland. Totally devoid of those ambitious aims which fire the hearts of other people they sought nothing beyond their modest homes. As to their morality no

other proof is needed than that of the fecundity of their families. The incomparable fertility of their farms gave to them in a few years sufficient means to easily establish their children near by, and they themselves be permitted to enjoy a comfortable old age. Every impulse of their hearts centered there; no toil was too severe if it but tended to increase their humble store. The soil of the low grounds being most fertile, they built dikes, by which the waters were controlled, thus converting marshes into reclaimed fields where the cereals grew in abundance, while thousands of cattle grazed on the adjacent plains. They indulged in none of the vanities that corrode and impoverish more pretentious communities, but frugality reigned supreme. Without education, and relying on the "Curé" 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 simplified their wants and rendered possible the existence of such a typical band of brothers, who asked 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 victims of the fierce contestants for power and empire. Long, weary years of contention with repeated change of ruling powers had at last resulted in 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 sympathy to those who spoke their native tongue, and who in every way were to them most dear and congenial. In every

sense their rulers were to them foreign, the name engrafted on their land cold and cheerless, their dreams reveled in "Acadia."

Thus the embers of unrest were ever warm in their bosoms, and calm and well disposed as they were, it required but little effort to fan them into a blaze. To the interior Canadian colonies, conditions ever present promoting active effort. Nova Scotia, now an English province, occupied a position on their eastern borders that largely interfered with their access to the ocean, which was not only the highway of commerce, but the only means by which they could maintain communication with France.

Fierce tribes of Indians, attached by interest to the Canadian colonies, occupied adjacent lands, and secret emissaries were always busy in arousing acrimonious feelings in the hearts of both the gentle-souled Acadians and the brutal savages.

To the English the accorded neutral citizenship was extremely distasteful, and when to this was added the unrest wrought by the agents of France it became odious. They were further both vexed and alarmed by the erection of a French fort just over the line. This was situated at Beausejour and adjacent to the district of mines, on a narrow isthmus connecting Nova Scotia with the mainland of Canada and seemed significant as the Basin of Mines was the most populous and also the wealthiest of the Acadian settlements. Whatever the real purpose may have been, the fort and its occupancy by the French troops was a constant menace to the rulers of the Province.

Surrender of the Fort.

CHAPTER III.

The tempest was slowly but surely gathering. But through all the perplexing situations the Acadian people kept as much aloof from participation as possible. 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 French provinces, and through this means to the government of France what could be expected as the result? With all this they greatly preferred to till the soil, tend their herds, and live in peace, that with far fewer exceptions than could be expected, they persisted in the pursuit of 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 unchanging 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. The fleet sailed from Boston harbor, and on arrival near their destination was 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 practical freebooters, they accepted the only apparent chance for self-preservation. Rendered desperate by the gloomy outlook, some three hundred joined the troops in the fort, while many, being undecided to the last moment what was best to do, finally hid their families in the woods and fought the invader from any cover they could find. Heroic but mistaken purpose, idle 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 pronounced them traitors.

With mock generosity they pardoned this grave offense, but there awaited them a doom no less grievous. It is this doom at which every sentiment of humanity revolts against 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 that at which the hearts of all good men rebel. Precedent does not palliate wanton

torture, physical and mental, more than it excuses the savage for burning his victim at the stake. The course pursued had not even the manly quality of open dealing, but consisted in a series of schemes, each of which was a trap so that turn which way they might, the intended victims must at last suffer the sentence of spoliation and expatriation. 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. These representatives were, however, astounded when informed that the old time treaty proviso, granting them immunity from bearing arms and also allowing especial religious privileges, could no longer be tolerated and would not be permitted. The oath must now be taken, 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 representatives could not at once answer for their constituency, in fact could do no less than to return to them for instruction in a matter so vital to their interests. When they returned for final consultation, the trap was sprung; it was pronounced too late. Pronouncing the delay an evidence of unwillingness and insincerity, 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 being 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 as familiar as with the face of an old-time friend. It was just as well, as neither negligence nor diligence could change their predetermined fate.



GOV. LAWRENCE AND WINSLOW PLANNING THE TRANSPORTATION.

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. Only such delay occurred as was unavoidable. While the husbandmen were occupied at

their labor, the commanding officers were 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 French or Acadian settlements. Of these there were several, each one a little world within itself.

The Acadians Prisoners.

CHAPTER IV.

The 2d of September, 1755, the lieutenant-colonel, Winslow, under pretext of devotion, hastened to Murray to be sure nothing had happened in ambush. It was here understood that a meeting should be called at the two districts the following Friday at three o'clock in the afternoon. Consequently a proclamation was issued, which was translated into the French language by a merchant named Beauchamp.

The proclamation addressed to the Acadians read as follows: "John Winslow, Esquire, Lieutenant-Colonel and commander of his Majesty's troops at Grand Pré, Gasporeaux Mines, Canard River, and adjacent districts,—to the inhabitants; old men, young men and boys. His Excellency the Governor desires to inform all of resolutions from his majesty. We order strictly all inhabitants as all boys over ten years of age to assemble at the Grand Pré church the following Friday, the fifth of the current month, at three o'clock of the afternoon thereby, to communicate to them orders received, hereby declaring attendance demanded without any excuse or pretext for absence under pain of confiscation of all goods movable and immovable. Given out at Grand Pré the 2nd day of September, twenty-ninth year of his majesty's reign, A. D. 1755."

On its face this notice was entirely innocent and in some places was fully and in others partially complied with. Possibly some might have noticed on that morning extraordinary military precautions had been 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 secrecy.

The two commanders now hurried their officers to the two principal centers to affix this proclamation. They found the inhabitants everywhere in the fields and suspecting nothing.

The following day at noon the whole American detachment were under arms at the entrance to the Grand Pré church, their guns loaded ready to fire.

Winslow, in grand uniform, surrounded by his staff was stationed at the door of the presbytery. His anxious looks were frequently turned toward the different roads which led to Grand Pré. He could not repress the expression of secret joy plainly visible on his features as he saw the inhabitants approaching in long files, those near by were coming on foot, and others from the Mines, Canards river, and the interior farms were coming in wagons.

At precisely three o'clock in the afternoon four hundred and eighteen Acadians of all ages were assembled in the church.

When the last one had entered the doors were closed and guarded the commander and a few officers took their places in front of the altar where a table stood on which he placed his instructions and the address he was about to read. For a moment his eye glanced at the sunburnt faces fixed on him with an expression of anxious silence after which he read the following address immediately translated to the French.

"Gentlemen.—I received from his excellency, Governor Lawrence, these instructions from the king which I hold in my hands; it is by this order that I declare you all and make you prisoners in

the name of the king and I hope that in whatever part of the world your fortunes may be cast you will be faithful subjects and a peaceable and happy people." He continued, "I must also inform you that it is his majesty's pleasure that you shall be retained in the custody and discretion of the troops which I have the honor to command."

Winslow finished his discourse by declaring them all for the second time prisoners of the king.



The astonishment and consternation of the Acadians on hearing this sentence is easier imagined than described. 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 door, and beyond them the guard under arms. Then their strong hearts bowed under the weight of wretchedness. Instantly passed before their eyes as in a panorama, their homes, their families and

every sacred tie, now suddenly to be severed forever; their fertile fields and well filled barns, their herds grazing on the plains, lost to them. Anguish rent every heart; they were now exiles and outcasts without country or home. Seated in their places in painful expectation, they began to realize the full extent of the blow; all they held dearest in the world was lost, themselves prisoners and their families doomed to perpetual exile.

They now understood that the vague suspicions they had refused to entertain were indeed too well founded, and that this pretense of assembly was but an infamous trap into which they had allowed themselves to be led; yet they did not immediately realize the full horror of their situation, as they persuaded themselves there was no such intention of expulsion. They could not believe there was a single minister in London who would advise the king to set such a trap for them or give his signature to such a decree; and they were right for the whole thing was an audacious falsehood. Never had such an order left England. Far from it, for precisely at the moment when Lawrence put his plot into execution and loosened the chains of his American bloodhounds against the poor Acadians the cabinet of London was not only ignorant of these proceedings, but requested their representatives at that very moment to be cautious and adopt measures of peace and conciliation.

This exile was due to the indiscreet zeal of the English government representatives in this country, tormented by their surroundings they submitted to fanaticism, and we may also admit it—to cowardice.

But what is still more incredible, is that, after these intimidations, when a few Acadians decided to take the oath of allegiance so doubtful to them, and pre-

sented themselves to Lawrence, he, instead of receiving them and promising them the quiet possession of their lands, haughtily repulsed them, saying it was too late, and that hereafter they should be treated like the miscreant papists they were, and had them flung into prison.

Ah! had their been in Halifax a true representative of the cabinet of London, the Acadians would never have been banished, and this stain would never have been inflicted on civilization.

When, after the famous assembly of the 5th of September, the Acadians saw Winslow go to the presbytery, a few of the older ones followed, begging permission of him to see their families that they might tell them what had happened to relieve their anxiety. After consulting with his officers he consented to release twenty each day on condition that the remaining ones would be responsible for their return, each family being enjoined to bring food for their members who were prisoners.

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. There arose shrieks of lamentation and agony in every home. In frenzy women and children rushed along the streets, wringing their hands in despair. It was the wailing of hopeless 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 coffined before them.

Some historians have tried to deny that covetousness of the Anglo-American colonies has been one of the causes of the expulsion of the Acadians.

We have only to open the collection of official documents at Nova Scotia to find the proof. This eagerness of gain dated back a half a century; it was one of the motives which engaged the provincials of New England in 1710; to enroll themselves in Nicholson's expedition against Port Royal. "They possess the best and largest farms in this province, wrote Governor Lawrence in 1754, and I cannot help thinking it would be much better if they refused to take the oath, as they might then be banished."

In other parts the Chamber of Commerce answered, 20th of October: "If the chief judge is of the opinion that in refusing to give their oath without reserve, or by deserting their establishments to join themselves to the French, they have forfeited their title of proprietorship, we desire that efficacious measures be at once taken, through legal proceedings, to place this forfeiture into execution, and by this means you will be in a position to grant these lands to all persons desirous of fixing themselves in this district, where we believe an establishment will be of very great utility."

The ax had fallen successfully at Grand Pré, which was a populous and thrifty village, surrounded by charming farms, with fields well tilled and barns overflowing from the recent harvest; but not with like success at some of the settlements, especially that of Beau Basin and Annapolis, where the people accustomed of old to seek in the forest a refuge against the cruelties of war; and where suspicions had by some means been aroused, only a portion reported as ordered, the remainder not waiting for the completion of this terrible catastrophe; the horror of which they only faintly imagined, but had hid themselves with their families in the woods

hoping against fate for something better than their fears had painted. Therefore a certain number only fell into the hands of their foes; and for this reason the American colonies did not at once take possession of their lands on account of the close proximity of the Arcadians, who might, they feared, return, and aided by the Indians, slaughter them all.

The downfall of the Beausejour fort, which placed most all of the Presque 'Ile in the hands of the English, decided the fate of the Acadians. The proof lies in the fact that those among them who were ready to take the oath were showed no more mercy than the rest, they were also condemned to exile. The missionaries being the only friends who remained faithful to them in their misfortune; for instance, the Abbot Millard, one of the most remarkable, who remained faithful to them, even on their descent to the Gulf; yes, and died in their midst, worn out with long privations and fatigue. And the Abbot Desenclaves followed them, in their retreat to Sandy Cape, until tracked there by the English, he was taken prisoner with the others and landed on the New England coast. Also the Abbot Laloutre, who drew the just reproaches of his Bishop upon himself. Is no merit due him for having exposed his life time and again for his flock? Had the Acadians heeded him when he beseeched them to emigrate, when he told them they stood on a volcano, that they had no worse enemies than those who maintained them in a false security, would they not have escaped their exile? And at the moment of the crisis, if his bravery and indefatigable energy had been seconded by Vergor, the traitor, could not the Acadians have rallied and aided by the Indians of the environs of Beausejour, prevented the down-

fall of the fort and by this means, make impracticable the outrage on the Mines?

Murray, whom we will presently know more of in the course of this recital, wrote to Winslow, saying, in regard to the troops, "You know that our soldiers detest the Acadians, and could they only find a pretext for killing them they would do so." This American veteran who had accepted so unworthy a mission of a soldier, had not a quiet soul, and to the credit of his heart be it said, shrank from it, for he was conscious of the role which he was about to act and the blemish it would forever place on his name. From several pages of his journal may be judged the remorse which troubled him.

Realizing, seemingly, from his own admissions, the depth of misery which he was about to create, it seems strange that he was not moved to compassion sufficiently to cause him to withdraw from such inhuman proceedings. "My hands and heart are heavy," he writes, "and I am anxious to be done with this business, the most painful I have ever taken part in."

And in spite of himself he kept contrasting the rural tenderness now present and the wild despair he would provoke in a few days. This contrast appeared all the more striking, being just the season of the year which the Basin of Mines offered the most seductive view, and at the point from which he gazed could assemble the full details which animated the quiet and charm of the country. He felt himself in an atmosphere of quietude and serenity, a solitary remoteness ignored by the world, here near this sheet of water, scarcely ruffled by the sheltered breeze, there by majestic heights, further on by the abrupt promontory of Pare Epic, and be-

yond by a quiet descent which circles into Grand Pré.

In a few days, however, this peaceful valley, which sheltered so many happy families, would become the most desolate spot on earth. The farmers scattered here and there in the field paused at intervals to inquire of each other what this new arrival of troops meant, but none could answer; they only shook their heads and sighed. Notwithstanding the vague suspicions which came to them from different places, they still had no idea of the frightful catastrophe which was about to fall on them! Following the assembly, the patrol were sent out to trace, and seize if possible, those who had evaded them at the first arrestation. The soldiers fired without pity on all who attempted to escape.

An Acadian, the name of Melanson, having seen the patrol in his neighborhood, jumped on his horse and tried to gain the woods, but an English ball prevented him, and he fell to the ground dead! And many others suffered the same fate.

Soon after the church at Grand Pré, which had been converted into a prison, contained nearly five hundred unhappy Acadians. They believed they had given sufficient proof of their neutrality in delivering up their fire arms, and by so doing they committed their last and most fatal mistake, thereby placing themselves at the entire mercy of their enemies, who were only awaiting a favorable occasion to lay the snare for the Acadians to fall into.

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 guards, had each day been allowed to visit their families; would

this blessed favor be taken away? were questions continually asked and ever answered by a hopeless moan.

We cannot read without emotion the request the Acadians presented to Winslow a few days after their detention.

"In view," they said, "of the misfortunes which seem to menace us on every side, we come to reclaim your protection, and to beg of you to intercede for us at his Majesty's throne, that he may have a little mercy for those among us who have inviolably held to the fidelity and submission which we promised his Majesty, and as you have given us to understand the king has ordered us to be banished from this province, we implore that if we must abandon our property and homes, we may at least be permitted to go where we will find some of our compatriots, we will willingly bear our own expenses of transportation, and that a convenient length of time will be allowed us; furthermore, we beg leave to go where we will be permitted to preserve our religion, which we have deeply at heart and for which we will be contented to sacrifice our property."

This request remained unanswered!

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.

Inflexible.

CHAPTER V.

Winslow had remained equally deaf to all the prayers and supplications of the women and children. Seeing the more daring ones openly show their indignation and consult each other, he became fearful lest they might do something desperate; according to the advice of his officers he resolved to take advantage of the arrival of five ships from Boston which had just anchored at the entrance to the Gasporeaux river. He was thus enabled to embark fifty captives on each ship.

Winslow called one of the oldest residents of the place, an old man eighty years of age, known as Father Landré, understanding English the best, he was called to act as interpreter. Winslow bid him tell the Acadians that two hundred and fifty among them would be immediately embarked, beginning with the young men; that they had a delay of one hour to prepare. Father Landré was completely astounded. "But I told him," adds Winslow, "that it had to be done and my orders must be executed."

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 two hundred and sixty young men were brought before the garrisons and placed in lines six abreast, then the officers left their ranks; the young unmarried men numbered one hundred and forty-one. After

they were placed in line eighty soldiers surrounded them, commanded by Capt. Adams. And these unfortunate victims submitted without resistance, until ordered to march toward the river to embark, then all refused obstinately, saying they would not leave in this barbarous manner.



THE EMBARKATION.

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.

The commander heeded not their cries or their despair, but brutally separated the son from the father, the brother from the sister, the husband from

the wife! This was the beginning of the cruel dismembering of families, that nothing can ever justify, and which has left a stain on the name of the author of it, which will never be effaced! When we remember that some of these young men were mere children of ten and twelve years of age we realize that these prisoners were not very dangerous. It is impossible, therefore, to understand this refined inhumanity. We will permit Col. Winslow himself to recount this incident: "I ordered the prisoners to march. All those little impudents answered they would not go without their fathers. I told them these were words I did not understand; the king's commands to me were peremptory, and must be obeyed, if not, more vigorous measures would be taken. I ordered all the troops to charge their bayonets and advance on this small French vermin. I commanded the four ranks of prisoners to the right, which comprised **twenty-eight young men, I ordered them to separate from the others. I seized one among them who tried to prevent the others from advancing, bound him with cords and threw him into one of the small boats which was to transport the married men."**

These poor children then resigned themselves to obedience, but not without some resistance and their cries and lamentations hurt even Winslow.

A crowd of women and children, among whom were the mothers and sisters of these little victims were witnesses of these heart-rending scenes, and the cries of the children who remained on the shore only increased the confusion around them.

The distance from the church to the point of embarkation was no less than a mile and a half. All along the march the unhappy women followed the prisoners' footsteps; mothers, wives, sisters, sweet-

hearts and 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-agonny nor can they portray the fierce sorrows of those who knelt by the way, greeting the prisoners with tears, blessings, and lamentations, bidding them as they fully believed a final adieu, and seeking to kiss even their garments for a last time.

Another squad of a hundred married men embarked after the first and in the midst of the same scenes. Husbands inquiring for their wives and children who remained on the shore begging the officers to reunite them; who, in response, fixed their bayonets and pushed them into the boats. Thus all moved quickly along the melancholy path, though trembling hand clasped hand that trembled, husbands for a moment only pressed lips to those of wife and child as they moved on under the eyes of the stern guard who would not, if they dare, brook the least delay.

When from the decks the prisoners 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 unhappy women and children wept and wrung their hands until "tired nature" and the gloom of night fall forced them to seek their homes.

One act in the infamous drama was over, an act that brought shame and dishonor into the English hearts who under orders compelled its execution.

There is a form of mercy in the ending of torture, but even this trifling boon was not granted the unhappy Acadians, for through long weeks of weary waiting for additional means of transportation they lay anchored in full view of their lost treasures.

Horrified beyond measure, incapable of thinking this cold inhumanity could be more than temporary, the women felt that the persecutors must relent, the hard heart soften, the iron 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.

However harsh Winslow may have been to the inhabitants at Grand Pré, it was nothing compared to the brutality of the Anglo-American soldiers, who were inspired with an inveterate hatred, and wrestled without shame against the Acadians.

In a letter from Murray to Winslow, announcing his arrival, we read the following passage: "I am anxious to see all these wretches embarked, then I will treat myself to the pleasure of meeting you and drinking a good journey to them!"

I renounce my intention of describing the tortures of this lamentable journey of the 8th of October; we can with difficulty listen to the tales told by the great grand children of the exiled Acadians; tales of this 8th day of October, which have been handed down to them by their ancestors and which will never be forgotten.

You should hear them tell you of this day of great disorder. From early morning crowds of women and children from Gasporeaux river and Grand Pré, the old and decrepid, feeble and infirm, were dragged along in wagonettes, while young mothers, carrying their new-born babe in their arms, were hurried along by the soldiers; the road seemed alive with this feeble and despairing mass of people.

Again the drums beat, troops paraded under arms, and divided 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 at the fireside, but as chance



DEPARTURE OF THE ACADIANS.

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 near the shore. At each of the villages the same blood-chilling scenes were enacted; without arms, and crushed beneath calamity the Acadians melted into tears and bowed to the atrocious law of a triumphant foe.

The Work of the Incendiaries.

CHAPTER VI.

The last vessel had not yet cleared the entrance to the Basin of Mines, when the captives which they carried cast a lingering glance of farewell at their loved land and perceived small rings of smoke rising from their homes and curling themselves heavenwards. Soon 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 over the cinders that smoldered beneath. The exiles could only gaze, wring their powerless hands and weep. A loud cry of anguish arose from every heart as the flames shot forth from their pretty church at Canards river, knowing full well the fate of the Grand Pre church, their hearts sank within them. These two temples, surmounted by their graceful steeples, had cost them many sacrifices; the rich ornaments it contained were presents sent from Louis XIV., and these also would disappear under the torch of their persecutors and tyrants.

The abandonment of their cemetery and their loved ones therein was another source of bitter pain for those unfortunate people. All these relics of veneration and profound attachment would soon be trampled and crushed under the tyrants heel on this ground so long venerated! Such were the agonizing thoughts of these poor wretches.

When the inhabitants of Port Royal, who had taken refuge in the woods, saw their houses and churches in flames, they had not as yet dared leave

their retreat; but on seeing their property melt into flames, threw themselves furiously on the incendiaries, killing and wounding twenty-nine; the remainder fled.

Also at Chipody the Acadians who had taken refuge with their families in the woods, on seeing the flames rise from their homes, their blood instantly became heated beyond endurance, guided by anger and thirsting for revenge, they hastily hid their wives and children more securely and hurriedly threw themselves on the enemy, who, broken by the furious attacks, hastened to their ships, leaving dead and wounded. 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. 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, all hovering near their lost treasures. Detached groups found their way into the interior of the Canadian settlement, to receive such care as is meted out to the impoverished and disconsolate. Through some chance, a group of these people fixed their habitation on the Madawaska, where, having passed through indescribable privations, they gradually de-

veloped 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 expatriated to return and establish themselves in Digby County, Township Clare, a rough and jagged place on the southwest shore of St. Mary's Bay, remote from all habitation and accessible only from the sea through a narrow and rockbound inlet. A few promptly availed themselves of this meagre indulgence. Long deprivation and suffering seemed to have softened the memory of their 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 comforts, now to them the sweetest luxuries.

This experience is sufficiently heartrendering, but is, if possible, surpassed by those, who, as they glided down the bay, gazed their last on their native land as the flames shot upwards through the dense clouds of smoke. No fleet had ever born on its decks such burthen of heart-breakings, decks that were moistened with torrents of tears. No desolation can be more dreary than transition of 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 the vessels sailing down the Bay of Fundy an Acadian, from Port Royal, by the name of Beaulien, asked the captain, with two hundred and twenty-seven others, what part of the world they were to be taken. "The first deserted island I run across will be good enough for such French Papists as you are," insolently answered the captain. Beaulien, beside himself with anger and endowed with extraordinary strength, struck the captain a blow which stretched him on the deck. This was the signal, although without arms, they threw themselves on the guards, wounded several and overpowered the remainder, and run the vessel ashore near St. John's river, finding refuge in friendly wigwams.

The remaining 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. According to the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of 1831, the number of prisoners thus removed from 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 thou-

sand 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.

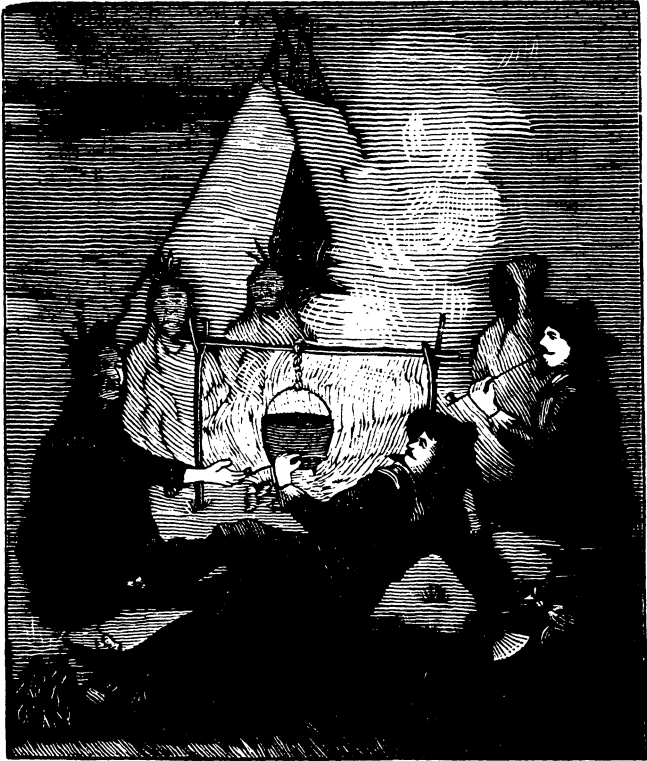
Fate of the Acadians.

CHAPTER VII.

As to the fate of the Acadians 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 Acadian 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 fishermen. There for several years they succeed in concealing their existence, and 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. 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 remain 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. Imagination alone can follow their devious fortunes as history has not preserved its details,



FRIENDLY WIGWAMS.

more than at the hands of those so intensely disliked they received 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 cottonwood 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 girls wear the Norman bonnet and petticoat, and where the village Cure is their guide and master, and church bells call them to that form of devotion from which they have never swerved.

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. Not long after they were joined by another small portion of the banished. 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 certain number still remained scattered in different places, living miserably in the remotest cantons.

All writers of Acadian history agree as to the preservation of their language, national character

and their vigilance in maintaining old customs.

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 meetings, 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: "Adele, 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.”

A Touching Scene.

CHAPTER VIII.

The following story was recounted to me by a most worthy Acadian veteran who assured me of its truth, his father being one of the actors. While crossing a wood he saw in the distance three little children, and on drawing nearer perceived they were playing beside the corpse of a woman, though they did not realize she would never press them lovingly to her breast again. "On seeing me approach them," continued the father of the veteran, "the elder of the children in terror called to their only protector: 'Mamma, mamma, get up! Why can't you rise! Mamma, here is a bad man who will again separate us!' and the poor children covered the body of their unfortunate mother and tried to protect her. The little boy cried to me in a determined tone: 'Do not approach my mother, for I will kill you!' the brave little fellow continued with a pride natural to the Acadians. 'You must not touch my mother; she is sleeping; she is very tired.' When he saw I still drew nearer, he caught up a stone: 'I will kill you,' he exclaimed. One of the little girls now said: 'We buried our father over there.' 'Yes, and our mother made the large hole in the ground,' answered the smallest of the trio. Then, with tears in my eyes, I took the little boy's hand and asked: 'Why do you want to kill me, my little lad.' 'Because you are English and you separated us and killed my father.' The little fellow now perceived tears in my eyes, and he turned very pale; the two little girls at their mother's feet were sobbing aloud. I will not speak of the scene that occurred when these poor children

were told their mother must be buried and that I was going to take them with me. The little boy with a will and energy incredible for a child of his size answered: 'Monsieur, leave our mother and do not touch her; or I will kill you.' I could no longer control myself, but seizing the little fellow in one arm I grasped the little girls with the other and pressed them all tightly to my bosom, assuring them of my friendship. I told them I also was in search of my wife and children.

"I buried this homeless wanderer, and finally the little ones decided to follow me, for I had completely abandoned my English accent, but I wished to know just how far these children were familiar with their own misfortunes. I had not long to wait. As we walked onward the little boy said: 'Sir, you have told us you were in search of your wife; very well, we will assist you, but be very careful not to harm my little sisters or we will leave you.' Eustace, what shall we call this good man,' asked the younger child. 'The name he wishes.' 'Then call me father, my children, for I will try and be one to you.' Then, Eustace, you will not kill him,' quickly spoke up the little girl. 'No, and if he is good to you I will be good to him, and we will find his wife and we will call her mother.' 'Yes, yes, we will call her mother,' answered all three."

During seven years, Joseph Letetlier, who tells us the above story, searched for his family, sometimes in the woods, now on the borders of the coast, interrogating the horizon which way to set his sail; hiding his boat at the least noise, for the English pursued them to the utmost; often he was obliged to take the three children in his arms to cross some precipice, which they were unable to leap. I will not attempt to describe what this weary traveler

must have suffered with these three young children. Never did mother watch with more solicitude three little beings than did this brave man. It frequently happened that when tired and exhausted from fatigue and hunger little Eustace would come and bravely offer to take his place, saying: "Rest, father, and sleep well, my little sisters, and I will keep watch and if the English come and take our boat we will kill them and throw them into the river."

Thus these children knowing only turmoil and strife had been taught to defend their lives from early youth.

At the end of seven years Joseph Letellier and his three orphans were sitting on the banks of the river gazing with melancholy eyes towards Belle river. Away in the distance near the shores of the Ohio, floated a small boat well-filled, guided by Acadian oarsmen; it carried a small band of exiles—a raft from a shipwrecked nation; united through common belief and common misfortune, men, women, and children, guided by hope or by the vague rumors were going to seek in the smiling prairies of Opelansas their relatives banished like themselves from Acadian shores.

After four hours of expectation, during which the boat glided with the current, now on the foam of the rapids, now amid verdant isles, finally approaching the regions of eternal summer, where blossom the orange flowers and citron. At last this little boat with its somber banner, hanging to the mast, made its way to the banks of the Mississippi to anchor there. Joseph Letellier sprang to his feet, gave one bound towards the boat; for he had recognized in its captain his own son. "Joseph, my beloved son," he cried, "where is your mother, your brothers and sisters?"

"We are but two remaining, Antoinette and myself. My poor mother and the others were unable to survive so much sorrow, misery and privation!"

It is impossible to describe the grief of this poor old man on learning of the death of these beings so dear to him; his arms beat the air, and he fell to the ground. The brother and sister failed to realize what was going on, but the two girls, Therese and Charlotte, hurried to the side of their adopted father, crying: "Assist our father!"



AS THEY REACHED THE SHORE JOSEPH RECOGNIZED HIS SON.

Quick as lightning the young captain like the Acadian he was, briskly jumped from the boat to the shore, closely followed by his sister. Then they both realized that it was indeed their father whom they had found. They covered him with caresses and gave him the best care their meager supplies afforded. Eustace returned from the river with water, while Therese with gentle hands bathed his temples, and every one from the boat hastened to the spot.

Charlotte the eldest of the sisters tremblingly asked Joseph, "Are you the son of our adopted father?" and when the captain replied in the affirmative she murmured: "Then since you are his children, my sister and I cannot be any longer."

Mr. Letellier opened his eyes as the fresh water touched his face. "These poor children," he said to his son, "I found them in the forest near the body of their mother dead about six hours." He motioned Eustace to come nearer and taking his hand placed that of his own daughter in it, saying: "Eustace, promise to love her and protect her." Oh, father, I promise you." Then the poor unhappy father raised his eyes and hands to Heaven and gazing at this group of unfortunate children who had found their father only to lose him again, tried to pronounce the name of his son, "Jos——" He never finished! His eyes closed never to open again. But what the father had been unable to finish, the hearts of the young people had understood. Like one and the same family, they threw themselves in each other's arms and there beside the corpse of their loved father swore an eternal friendship.

During the last war the Creole Acadian women fought as bravely as did their fathers in the ranks of the confederates. A regiment composed mostly of Acadian women was commanded by a handsome Acadian. Captain Joseph Letellier married Therese three months after the death of their venerable father, who had affianced them with his last breath; and Eustace married pretty Antoinette.

The devotion and patriotism of Captain Letellier had won for himself the love and confidence of his whole regiment. This gallant warrior was decorated only by a white shoulder belt on which was written "Vive Dieu et la France."

Ah! It is a pity that the courtiers from the court of Louis XIV. had not seen this beautiful regiment of young women ranked in columns and braving the enemy from all sides with these proud words of response on their lips: "God, our captain, France and Acadia," for it is probable that peace might have been restored; for a people in which patriotism can inspire such devotion is worthy of respect and justice. But, alas! This heroism was witnessed only by their foes who at the sight of this regiment became more enraged.

The general of the enemy's army on hearing these lofty exclamations ordered his army to advance and charge their bayonets. But this command did not frighten the regiment of women, who again shouted: "Long live France, Acadia, and our captain." Just then the brave and handsome Commander Letellier quick as lightning passed in front of the ranks and with his tomahawk struck the general a blow which sent him headlong from his horse. The stupefied confederates now believed they were dealing not only with women but a very formidable looking band of men, well armed, who seemed to rise out of the ground. They became cowards; confusion spread in their ranks; they retreated, fleeing on all sides. With this finished the war record of young Letellier.

New Parishes and their Founders.

CHAPTER IX.

Our two young couple now turned their attention to their lost Acadia, their beautiful home still so fresh in their memory, and accordingly decided to perpetuate that memory in their newly found home where they were to find quiet and rest, in giving to this colony the loved name of Acadia.

The first band of Acadians who settled here were followed in 1765 by many others, some coming from Nova Scotia where they had been hidden in the woods. These patriots founded on the shores of the Mississippi the parishes called St. James and the Assumption. The above facts relating to the Acadians were obtained from New Orleans.

That small society organized by the curate of St. Mary has remained so purely French, that we might call it a strand transplanted from lower Normandy with a seal of originality striking to visitors. The moment we enter the district of Clare, the houses, the instruments of husbandry, the strange language, and characteristic customs, are surprising to the traveler. We would not believe there existed in Nova Scotia a district with an aspect so very distinct from the remainder.

The Acadians of to-day are far from being as far advanced as their neighbors; they differ in this form from their ancestors who were excellent cultivators. But this is easily understood by those who know their history. Since their banishment, they have a singular attachment to their language and customs. Although their trading naturally brings them in contact with the English, they never adopt their

manners or intermarry with them, nor do they establish themselves in English villages. This is not due to a sentiment of aversion, but rather from habits of the national character and their system of education; and if they are not endowed with as much of the spirit of progress as the English colonies they may favorably stand comparison as regards social and domestic virtues.

Without ambition and with wonderful frugality they live according to their means; devoted to their ancient culture they have never been divided by religious discords. With happy dispositions and moral habits they enjoy every pleasure compatible with human nature.

Clare is now in a flourishing state; it owns several small vessels and the surplus of farm products, and fishing profits, permit the farmers to enlarge and improve their farms and purchase elsewhere all necessary articles for their comfort.

They have two chapels at either extremity of the village. The one built at the oriental extremity is one of the largest in Nova Scotia and does great honor to the generosity of the people who have completed it without outside assistance.

They have several sawing machines, and there remains not a trace of the fire which consumed the whole village in 1820.

The greatest misfortune to the Acadians has not been the fact alone of their expatriation, but in the complete abandonment in which they have been left for nearly a whole century. During this sad period they have had, we may say, no means of education whatever. The greater number of the Acadians were for years without even missionaries residing among them to instruct them.

We can conceive the ignorance and stagnation which must have followed. But in our days a new

era has begun for the Acadians, and it coincides precisely with the opening of the college of Memra-cook which has been the principal cause.

From this college came forth men thoroughly instructed, active, and animated with ardent, and brilliant patriotism; who have won their reputation in different vocations, and who have defended the cause of their comrades both in public and private life. We may name among them senators such as P. P. Pourrier, as distinguished a writer as he is a brilliant politician. Deputies of local as well as provincial legislature, such as Messrs. Landry, Leblanc, Terriault, Le Billois, etc. Also lawyers, physicians, and instructors, as well as excellent priests. Among the latter we may mention the Abbot Carmier, cure of Cocagne, and the great benefactor of the college named above, also the Rev. Father Lefebure, superior of the same college.

Each year will add to this splendid lot of men who in time will regain for the Acadian people the position which they had lost through their misfortunes.

There are two other French settlements in the district of Argyle situated fifty miles further, the one at Pubinco, the other at El Brock. In these settlements the inhabitants are called temperate, industrious, and hospitable. They have fine herds of cattle, and are very comfortably built. Illegitimate births are entirely unknown in these settlements and true misery is never felt, as the poor are cared for by the settlers, who are all encumbered with large families. The poor pass their time making stays from house to house; each family feels it a sacred duty to receive what they consider the living remains of their ancestors, and their death is often regretted as they imagine it a duty and a benediction which God sends to them, for they say: "Whosoever giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord."

Halliburton's Speech.

CHAPTER X.

Mr. Halliburton, judge in Nova Scotia, had 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." This great man's friendship for the Abbot Sigogne continued to the period of his election for the county of Clair, which includes St. Mary's parish. These two men of superior talent in their different careers, understood one another at their first meeting.

The author of Sam Slick took great interest in conversing with this French priest, whose life, ideas and habits contrasted so strangely with his surroundings. On his part the priest felt a warm friendship for this bright, intelligent, sensitive, sarcastic, free-of-all prejudice Protestant, and he did not hesitate to notify his party that they could depend on his influence in favor of religious independence; and was one of the first to propose the abolition of the test oath, which barred all Catholics from holding a public office. Father Sigogne was one of the first promoters of the emancipation act, presented and unanimously adopted by the legislature of Nova Scotia—thanks to the masterly speech by Halliburton in 1827—the most remarkable part of which was his eulogy of the Acadians, of whose manners and habits he had made a special study during his residence in Annapolis, from 1722 to 1724. Says Beamish Murdock, referring to it, "it was the most magnificent and eloquent oratory that I ever heard." Halliburton was then mentally and physically in the

prime of his life. The bracing air of his native home, Windsor, gave him a robust appearance, although his figure was still young and spare. On this occasion he literally carried his audience with him by the force of his eloquence, aided by his classical and historical studies, and by his appeal to the tenderest feelings of human nature. The speech is too closely allied to our subject to pass without citing a few passages. After informing them that he represented a great number of Catholics, and that for several years he had been an intimate friend of their venerable pastor, Father Sigogne. "For what reason," he asked, "does the Protestant and Catholic mix in the same social reunions—and live in perfect harmony? Why does the Catholic weep at the death of a Protestant friend he has loved while living? Why does he act as pall-bearer to his final resting place and mingle his tears with the dust that covers his friend? If in Great Britain there is an evident feeling of hostility it must be for other causes than a simple difference of religion. Ireland offers the saddest spectacle. While the Catholic is in duty bound and naturally inclined to support his priest he is obliged by the laws of the country to pay tithes to the Protestant minister. Then you see churches without believers, ministers without congregations, and bishops enjoying immense salaries without any duty to perform. These Catholics must be more or less than men if they suffer all this without complaint; they feel it and murmur. The Protestants on their part are continually clamoring against them, and declare them a bad class of people. All Catholic church property has passed into the hands of the Protestant clergy, also the tithes, lands and domains of the monasteries. Who can contemplate without regret those monasteries, ven-

erable even in their ruins? What have become of those scientific, charitable and hospitable asylums, where the pilgrim, weary from a long journey, or the harrassed traveler, stopped for rest and received a hearty welcome; wherê the poor received their daily food—and implored with a heart full of gratitude the benedictions of the pious and good men that fed them. Those asylums where knowledge held her assizes and science plunged her flaming hand into the darkness of barbarism and ignorance?"

"Allow me Mr. President to linger as I often have in times long ago during hours and days amidst these ruins; you also must have lingered to contemplate those desolate ruins. Tell me while contemplating those cloisters, and while your foot tread their mosaic paths through which the grass grows, have you not imagined hearing the solemn tread of the monks in their holy procession? Have you not imagined hearing the chimes of the bells pouring forth in the eve their soft and melancholy sounds through the quiet and solitary valley? Have you never heard the Seraphic choirs diffuse the harmonious chant of their hymns through immense waves or aerial arches? Do not these columns in ruins, those Gothic arches, those cracked and ivy covered walls appeal to you, while reminding you of the spoilers, at least to shed a tear in the memory of those great and good men who founded them? It has been said that Catholics were the enemies of liberty, but that assertion, like many others brought against them, is utterly false. Who established the grand chart? Who established our judges, our jury system, our magistrates, our sheriffs, etc? It was the Catholics. It is to those slandered people that we owe everything of which we are proud to-day.

Were they not loyal and brave? Ask the green hills of Chrystler's Farm; ask at Chateauguay; ask the hills of Queenstown. They will tell you they cover the loyal and brave Catholics, the ashes of heroes who died for their country. Here their sentiments had full sway, because there was no cause for dissension and no properties to dispute. They were looked upon as good subjects and good friends. Friendship is natural to man's heart. It is like the ivy searching the oak, twining around its trunk, embracing its branches, surrounding them with beautiful wreaths and climbing to the top, balances its magnificent banner of foliage above, as though proud of having conquered the king of the forest.

"Look at the township of Clare. There you see a magnificent spectacle, a whole nation having the same habits, speaking the one language, and united in the one religion. It is a spectacle worthy of the admiration of man and the approbation of God. See their worthy pastor the able Sigogne, at the rising of the sun surrounded by his people rendering thanks to the author of all gifts. Follow him to the sick bed; watch him diffuse the balm of consolation on the wounds of the afflicted. Follow him in his field showing an example of industry to his people; in his cabinet instructing the innocent youth. Follow him in his chapel; you will see the savage from the desert with all his fierce and untamed passions. You will see him conquered and submissive in the presence of the holy man. You will hear him tell the Indian to recognize God in the calm and solitude of the forest, in the roar of the cataract, in the splendid order of the planetary system, in the regular order of day and night; the Indian does not forget to thank God in his own dialect for the revelations the white man has taught him." Mr. Halli-

burton next recited the dispersing of the Acadians: then as a representative of the descendants of those people, he demanded of the deputies the abolition of the test oath, not as a favor, as he would not accept it through compassion, but from their justice. "Any man," said he in conclusion, "who puts his hand on the New Testament, and says this is my book of faith, be he Catholic or Protestant, whatever may be the difference of opinion on certain doctrines, he is my brother and I embrace him. We are traveling different paths to the same God. In my pathway of life I meet a Catholic. I salute him, travel with him, and when we arrive at the term, 'flammanitia lumina mundi,' and when this time comes, as it surely must; when this tongue that today expresses my thoughts will chill in my mouth: when this breast that now breathes the pure air of heaven will refuse longer to serve me; when these earthly clothes will return to the earth from whence they came and will mingle with the dust of the valley, then with the Catholic I will turn a long, languishing look at the past, I will kneel with him, and instead of saying like the presumptuous Pharisee: 'Grace to God, I am not like this papist,' I will pray that both being of the same blood we will both be pardoned, and being brothers we will both be received above."

Such language from a Protestant addressed to a Protestant audience could not fail to produce its effect. At the same time he showed the impression, the holy life of the Abbot Sigogne had on all his surroundings. The Catholics of Nova Scotia, and particularly the Acadians, have placed beside the name of Halliburton the name of Mr. Uniacke, one of the most noted members of the legislature, who supported the deputy of Clare, if not with the same

eloquence at least with the same spirit of justice. With this victory dropped the last chain from the Acadians and opened an era of liberty that has made them one of the happiest nations on the face of the earth.

Reminiscences.

CHAPTER XI.

Providence granted the Abbot Sigogne seventeen years of life from that date to strengthen the good he had done in the midst of this population, becoming more and more docile to his voice and examples. He died of old age in 1844, at the age of eighty-five, taking with him the regrets of all his people and everything that shows a man that life is worth living for, and the conviction of having accomplished his duty and deeds that never die. If ever you cross St. Mary's bay you will see Abbot Sigogne's grave, surrounded with honor and respect. You will see there the children whose parents he baptized, and of whom he made more worthy of the confessors of the last century. With the Abbot Sigogne died in Acadia the generation of Apostoical men that the tempest of '93 had scattered over the surface, and divided into three provinces, namely, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward's Isle. The small knots of families the missionaries had discovered on the verge of being lost, that they organized, disciplined, to whom they gave a part of their lives and virtues, have to-day become legions, full of brave and courageous people on whom we can depend. After increasing on their own merit, by doubling every twenty-one years from 1785 to 1827, they doubled every twenty-two years from 1827 to 1871. The last official census of 1881 states that there is to-day 56,635 Acadians in New Brunswick, 41,219 in Nova Scotia, which forms part of Cape Breton, 10,757 on Prince Edward's Isle. Those figures do not include the Acadian population of the

Magdalena Isles, which numbers over three thousand, nor those north of the Gulf of the Bay Des Chalems, Newfoundland and the State of Maine, belonging to the Madawaska group, which will raise about twenty thousand souls, giving the Acadian population of all these regions a total of over 130,000 souls. As I said before the Acadians are represented by men of their own race. In the Senate and House of Commons they have their deputies and even their local legislators. Men educated and noted among all classes of society, we no longer count the number of their schools, at the head of which stands Memramcook's classical college, without a doubt the best Catholic institution in the Maritime Provinces. They have several convents devoted to the instruction of youth in each of the Provinces, and as far as the Magdalena Isles they control the election in many counties. They have their French papers that teach them their rights, their attachment to their language and to France, at the same time declaring their entire fidelity to England. In fact they possess all the elements of progression possible to wish. The reunion of the British Provinces in Confederation strengthened them, at the same time binding them more closely to their brothers in Canada. In fifty years they will number half a million, and will be a power in the Maritime Provinces, as the Canadians are to-day in the Confederation.

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 I publish here. It is sad, indeed, in exhibiting the national character, to call back the painful end of efforts which, at their beginning, raised such bright and legitimate hopes, but

we must overcome the national 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 hour 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 Maritius, 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 knew not 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 prospect 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.

Tragedy of Claude de la Tour.

CHAPTER XII.

Five hundred and seventy-nine miles in twenty-four hours by the Intercolonial road from Quebec to St. John, New Brunswick. The train, as usual on that line, was just late enough to enable me to miss the boat making three trips per week between St. John, Digby and Annapolis. Compelled am I to wait until night for the steamer from St. John to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. These delays are so frequent that gossip says there is an understanding between the railroad conductors and St. John hotel keepers, the latter having the reputation of charging exorbitant prices to travelers. My experience at the Royal Hotel will confirm the above statement.

Far away to the south the blue shores of Nova Scotia, separated here by the narrow but high chain of mountains, with a suspension bridge a hundred feet above the gorge, at the bottom of which the St. John River percipitates itself in a foaming cataract of elegance and strength. From this point can be witnessed one of nature's greatest wonders on the continent. The tide that rises as high as twenty-six feet in this vicinity engulfs itself in this gorge, repulses the current and permits for a few minutes vessels to mount above the cataract. In 1634 Baron La Tour, a Huguenot gentleman, built a fort on Point Carleton, opposite Navy Island, a few rods above the cataract, where he did a profitable business in pelts and trading with the Indians. This fort, now entirely demolished, witnessed one of the most tragical events in the annals of America. Leaving Paris with his son Charles Amador, then fourteen

years of age, Claude La Tour at first thought of settling in Acadia, near Port Royal. Seventeen years later Charles La Tour was elected governor of Acadia through the death of Biencourt, son of Pout-rincourt, whom he succeeded.

Claude De La Tour being taken prisoner by the English some time previous was conducted to London, where he was surrounded by caresses, made Baronet, and married to the first Maid of Honor of Queen Henriette of France, wife of Charles the I. the same Princess that was immortalized by Bos-suet. Claude De La Tour offered the King of Eng-land to secure him the keys of Fort St. Louis, the ably fortified post held by the French in Acadia. He sailed with two frigates for America and anchored under the walls of Fort St. Louis, of which but a few ruins remain, and proposed to his son to deliver the place to him. In return he assured him the greatest honors awaited him in London, and the supreme Government of Acadia in the name of the King of Great Britain. "Father," answered Chas. De La Tour indignantly, "you are greatly mistaken if you think I would deliver this fort into the hands of the enemies of this State. I will defend it for the King, my master, as long as I have a breath in my body. I highly esteem the position offered me by the King of England, but will never purchase it at the price of treason. The Prince I serve is able to re-compense me, but should he forget me, in my fidelity I will find the best of all rewards."

Seeing there was no alternative he landed his troops and cannon and attacked the fort, where he was gallantly repulsed and forced to retreat. Becoming at the same time a traitor of France and the cause of a disaster to England, the poor unfortunate dared not return to Europe. He advised his wife to return

with the vessels to England, for there was nothing left him but shame and misery. "Never," assured the noble woman; "I have not espoused you to abandon you at the first reverse of fortune. Wherever you will conduct me, and no matter to what misery you may be reduced, I will always be your faithful companion. My happiness shall always be to share your grief." La Tour then turned to his son, whose grandeur of soul he began to understand, and asked for clemency. The hero did not belie himself, but taking his father and family, gave them a house and a bountiful supply of everything necessary, on condition that he and his wife should never put their foot inside the fort, where they lived in peace and comfort several years.

Acadian Recollections.

CHAPTER XIII.

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 I was reared. It is true that those who made the terrible journey through the wilder-



OF-TOLD ACADIAN LEGENDS.

ness 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 vessel that carried them to the English colonies, others in the forest during their wanderings in search of a place to rest.

Some of those 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.

These sorrowful stories were so burned into my young heart, that in my after-journeyings through the province 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 it was 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, blessing them, and asking God to protect them from the tyranny of the English, and lastly, 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 the cottage, the erection of which was just starting, my father was born: and in the same colony I first saw the light of day.

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

No, the voice of their 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. The calumny will fall upon the memory of those vile representatives of a noble English crown, and follow them beyond their tombs.

(The End.)