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Prize Tale and Poem.

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THE

WHITE ROSE IN ACADIA,

AND

AUTUMN IN NOVA SCOTIA.

BY "MAUDE."

*C. Jennings*

HALIFAX:

PRINTED BY JAMES BOWES AND SONS.

1855.

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PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA.

Be it Remembered, that on this fourth day of January, A. D. 1855, JAMES BOWES AND SONS, of Halifax, in the said Province, have deposited in this Office, the title of a book, the copyright whereof they claim in the words following: "PRIZE TALE AND POEM. THE WHITE ROSE IN ACADIA, AND AUTUMN IN NOVA SCOTIA. By "MAUDE." HALIFAX. Printed by James Bowes and Sons, 1855," in conformity with chapter 119, of the Revised Statutes.

LEWIS M. WILKINS,  
*Provincial Secretary.*

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DEDICATION.

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THE FOLLOWING TALE AND POEM,

WRITTEN FOR THE

*Industrial Exhibition of Nova Scotia,*

ARE INSCRIBED

WITH MUCH RESPECT.

TO

HIS EXCELLENCY SIR JOHN GASPARD LE MARCHANT,

LIEUT. GOVERNOR OF NOVA-SCOTIA.

BY

THE AUTHOR.

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THE  
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NOVA SCOTIA, or "Acadia," was colonized by the French, about a century previous to that war between France and England, which closed with the year 1748; and 'Acadia,' as the Province was entitled in the treaty then made between the two Kingdoms, was in that year, ceded for the last time to the English Crown.

Among the numerous adventurers to Nova Scotia, in 1749, with Governor, the Honorable Edward Cornwallis, was an Englishman, who had served for many years in the British Army. Poor, and harassed with the care of a family, his means were totally inadequate to aid his advancement in England; he had come to the New World, with numbers of his class, a worn and anxious man, bringing with him, a wife and four children delicately bred,—and a strong heart that looked hopefully to his new home.

The infant Town of Halifax though vigorously settled and defended, and wisely governed, was subjected to so many attacks, and surprises from the jealous and malignant Indians of the time, and any attempt at improvement was rendered so hazardous, by the merciless nature of their warfare, that Captain Charles Leceister, the

emigrant of whom I speak, determined, a few months after his arrival, to remove his family to some one of the peaceable and thriving villages of the Western Rivers. Several circumstances lessened the difficulties of this design. He had become familiar with some of the prominent men of the French Settlements, who frequently visited Halifax as Deputies to the English Governor, from their various communities; and had become so popular with them, from his knowledge of their language, and evident yet courteous superiority, that, exclusive as the Acadians were, in habit and feeling, their kindly representatives did not discourage the Englishman, when he openly talked of his desire to dwell among them.

These French settlements were almost entirely composed of a rural peasantry; living together in harmonious prosperity; gay, simple, tender and industrious. But they were thinly sprinkled with a few families of a better order; the remnant, descended from their gallant and noble countrymen, who had charmed the savages of Port Royal into lasting affection, more than a hundred years before.

Out of this superior class, as was natural, the Acadian peasants chose their Deputies; and it was perhaps not strange, that these should find the companionship of Captain Leceister, and his refined wife, very attractive; alien though they were, in blood and faith. And more than all, these men were mostly wise enough to value their happy prosperous homes; and so long as they were not called to bear arms against the French King, in any new rupture between the two Crowns, were anxious to promote in every reasonable way, the alliance of their own people,



with the new rulers of the Country. So, influenced by the residence, and great friendliness of Henri Pontrincourt, one of the most superior of the Acadians, Captain Leceister chose one of the lower villages of the Gaspereaux Valley, as his future home; and in a very few years, could sit in his low cottage porch at sunset, and thank God for the rest and plenty he had found, as he looked abroad at his own beautiful meadows, and swelling uplands.

The Gaspereaux, rising in a distant mountain lake, continues to descend for some miles, in a clear rapid stream, through a precipitous chasm of the wooded hills, which tower mightily over the dark and narrow water. Gradually, the base of the cliffs lose their inaccessible character; the sides sloping inland, leave verdant banks below the rigorous steeps; until the widening river sweeps circuitously on, through a romantic valley, conquering the retreating mountains, and flowing, like 'Yarrow,' through "the pomp of Cultivated Nature." Down the wider part of this vale, the Acadians were established, their lands and villages occupying about fifteen miles of the lower borders of the Gaspereaux, which falls with considerable volume into the open Basin of 'Minas.'

Surrounded by these people, Captain Leceister was soon living happily in the pleasant little village of 'Molanson.'\* His wife, though a delicate and reserved Englishwoman, was cordially loved, as she deserved to be, by her cheerful neighbours; and his eldest child Edith differed so entirely, in manner, character, and beauty, from the gay French girls with whom she dwelt, that she was caressed and loved by the generous people, all the more, for the contrast.

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\* 'Molanson' was the name of an Acadian village on the Gaspereaux.

Nor was Edith altogether sundered from her own countrywomen in the Acadian valley; two or three other emigrants situated similarly to Captain Leceister, having followed him to 'Molanson;' but among these, there were none to rival her, in the eyes of the observant natives, and it was only Edith, who was known as "the English girl;" the "white rose of the river."

I have seen one woman, very like what Edith is represented to have been. A shape, round, and flexible;—a head beautiful and uncommon, rising and broadening from the comparatively low forehead, and adorned with long abundant hair, of that pale lustrous brown, so different in character from the ordinary insipidity of light hair;—and the clear face, with no distinct color, and small soft features, scarcely firm, yet not weak;—were visible to the most casual glance. But to closer study, the one great fault of her character, strong, though latent pride, was not quite hidden, in the smile of the charming mouth; though it was more than atoned for, by the sweet, intense eyes, that were of that dark pure blue, we talk of so much, and see so seldom. She had also that general complexion of extreme, yet warm whiteness, seen only, I think, in a few English and Irish women. Such was Edith, and the picture I have attempted to give, has no exaggeration; the apparition her name recalls to me, is lovelier far than my words can show.

Captain Leceister had been thus most fortunately settled at 'Molanson,' about six years, when Pierre, the eldest and only son of Henri Pontrincourt, returned to the Valley, from a respectable Provincial Seminary in France; whither he had been sent by his father, for greater educational advantages than could be obtained in Nova

Scotia; although the Acadian settlements were by no means destitute in these respects: their exemplary and often accomplished clergy being daily teachers, as well as pastors.

Pierre Pontrincourt's return, was welcomed with great joy by his family, and celebrated by the simple festivals of his people. Nor were the Leceisters slow to show their sympathy, and interest in the event; earning themselves new popularity, by the cordial affection with which they met their friend's son.

And their friend's son, was in no degree undeserving, or careless of their attention. Indeed, he began early to surprise some of the rural belles, by spending so much of his time with the 'English family.' But the upright Edith, had always so scrupulously abstained from seeking the small triumphs she might easily have secured among women, that she was safe from that bitterest of foes—an old rival—and the French girls saw with pride, that she did not decline the familiar companionship of her gay new acquaintance, as she had hitherto done that of his less polished countrymen. Particularly as there was ample compensation to be found in her three brothers, who were sufficiently zealous for the attainment of feminine favour. So the sprightly brunettes said with fond generosity: "Our best is scarce good enough for Edith. No marvel that he likes the 'White Rose.'"

It soon became evident that he did more than like the 'White Rose,' that it was a daily necessity to seek its beautiful presence, and fragrant breath. It seemed too, that the pale flower gained a lovelier bloom in the sunshine that surrounded its brilliant worshipper. Heretofore it had

stood purely in the shade, cold, graceful and lonely; but now it lifted its delicate head to the light, with a softer flush and sweeter odour.

Each had found a conqueror in that secluded valley of the Wilderness, and in their obscure love there was as much heroic material as the grandest exhibition of the 'grande passion,' claiming the world for its stage, could furnish.

Each found in the other the great, but equal contrast, that often makes the exceeding charm of such intercourse; and is the secret of the imperative need, each nature finds for its opposite. These two had no mental arguments upon the matter, but each knew instinctively that the other was its own. Pierre Pontrincourt lived in impulsive and decisive action,—Edith in a sort of stately abstraction,—and it was curious to see, how soon they influenced and benefited each other. The tenderness so seldom outwardly moved in her, was not less strong, but much more demonstrative in him; and completely won the proud woman, who would not lift her eyelids for that which did not come spontaneously as summer rain.

So the brilliant August days, that ripened the blessed grain on the sides of the happy Valley, found Pierre Pontrincourt, and Edith Leceister in Arcadia indeed. They did not know that they were too happy,—their life was as yet in its beautiful morning, though they were nearing fast the "burden and heat of the day." And, although Pierre was of the temperament that lives rapidly, and already far older at heart than Edith—being with all his grace and gaiety, more melancholy and passionate in the depths of his nature—the farthest deep was yet

unfathomed, and neither of them, to use the words of an exquisite writer of our own time, had "ever heard the foot of deadly sorrow all their days."

But the troubles that had long occasionally harassed the Acadian settlements, arising out of the deep hostility felt by the Indians, and not a few of the French, who called themselves 'Neutrals,' toward the English Colony at Halifax, were fast thickening,—and signs ominous of evil, increased daily in the pleasant villages of '*Minas*,' and the neighbouring Rivers.

At 'Cumberland,' or 'Chiegnecto,' as it was then called, and Port Royal, there had already been serious mischief,—and in various parts of the Province, the Indians had undoubtedly been indebted for the frequent success of their secret and sanguinary attacks upon the English Forts, to the equipment in boats, arms, and ammunition, furnished by those of the French Acadians who conceived their race aggrieved—as it indeed partially was—by its subjection to English dominion.

Indeed, it was scarcely possible for true cordiality to subsist between these people and the Government established at Halifax, although good and wise men on either side, had always been anxious to use great forbearance in circumstances naturally irritating.

But the 'Neutral French' were no longer trusted by the English Governor; and troops were quartered in all the villages that were likely from the disposition of the inhabitants, or a favorable locality, to assist the savages in their unprovoked and intolerable warfare. These troops, to say the truth, were billeted upon the Acadians, in a very unceremonious, and aggravating way; and did not

fail to increase the bitter feeling already prevalent against them.

But, looking at all the available accounts of that miserable period of our history, common fairness toward the Acadian population of the time, justifies us in believing, that great numbers were innocent of the treachery ascribed to them, and were, as they professed to be, and must have been, if they were rational at all, truly neutral, in the French and Indian war.

Proofs of the honesty of many of the 'Neutrals,' still remain in authentic records; and the family of Henri Pontrincourt, at 'Molanson,' was conspicuous for its anxiety to preserve good faith with its acknowledged rulers.

It happened, early in the August of which I speak, that Henri Pontrincourt had intelligence of preparations making at 'Chiegeto' for the departure of an Indian party, whose design was to surprise a body of English troops, then on the march between Halifax and the English Fort, latterly built, and garrisoned at 'Pesiquid;' a flourishing Acadian settlement then, our much admired 'Windsor,' now.

The elder Pontrincourt, had no hesitation respecting the right thing to be done. Knowing the intentions of the savages, he would not sit quietly at home, and leave christian men to the chance, almost the certainty, of secret and merciless slaughter. His son had been as usual, to the 'Willow Cottage,' as Captain Leceister's house was called; and when he reached home in the deepening twilight, the old man had completed the few arrangements necessary, for Pierre's immediate departure

to 'Pesiquid,' with information to the Officer in Command there, of the apprehended danger.

A small shallop of their own, in which such excursions were frequently made, was in readiness at a landing-place, on the River, a little below the Village; and the father was anxious that it should proceed on its mission, as soon as the approaching darkness should ensure its sudden sailing, from the observation of the neighbourhood. For, much as the Pontrincourts were honored, and beloved among their own people, they knew that they were not likely to be judged quite fairly, if their present anxiety on the part of the English soldiers, became generally known in the Valley; and Pierre felt that his father was right, in urging him not to return to the Leceisters, before leaving the River. There would have been nothing injudicious, of course, in trusting Captain Leceister with the affair, but the old Frenchman had somewhat ungallant misgivings, regarding the discretion of womankind, and had more limited ideas of Edith's privileges than he suspected his son to entertain. He felt quite sure that if Pierre went back, for a parting with Edith, he would see nothing wrong in disclosing to her the nature of his errand to 'Pesiquid;' and much as he liked the Leceisters, it was perhaps natural that he should not see the necessity of telling them, that which he thought it wise to hide from his own people. So he said to his son: "It is safer and better that none but ourselves should know of this. Gabrielle Pipon has been talking of coming to dance at our harvest. Tell her mother you have come for her; bring her back with you, and your visit to 'Pesiquid' will seem sufficiently reasonable."

To leave 'Molanson,' without seeing Edith Leicester, even for so short a time as his absence was likely to occupy, chafed the young man's spirit more than he chose to acknowledge; but he had been so accustomed to listen reverently to his father, that he made no demur to the prescribed arrangements; and having promised that he would not return to the English family, made no attempt to break his word.

He had engaged to accompany Edith upon the next evening, to a simple festival, to be held at one of the few English houses in the Village; and had been very earnest about securing her hand, for the dances in which she might choose to mingle. Very trifling as this matter would have seemed to his father, Pierre found no pleasure in the smallest chance of offending Edith; and knowing that she would not hear the true cause of his absence, and loving her, with the humility and fear of love, too great to believe that it could win the like return, he dreaded the effect of, what would seem to her, his presumptuous neglect.

She had owned with little scruple, and with pure and womanly honesty, that she loved him. To have trifled with his earnestness, that she might enhance her own value, would have been impossible, to Edith's simple, lofty nature; but she had not told him, nor, indeed, did she then know, how much she loved him. She had shown him no raptures, and he was too happy in the calm tender delight with which she met him, and too unselfish, to murmur at giving more than he expected to receive.

Pierre judged rightly when he foretold Edith's dis-



pleasure. She appeared at the gay gathering of her neighbours, intuitively anxious to conceal her annoyance; stately, pale, and beautiful as usual; and talked to the Valley girls with her general sweet composure. But for the first time in her life, she was thoroughly roused, and angry at heart. She knew that Pierre had gone suddenly to 'Pesiquid,' and no more; and she felt positively wrathful, when one of the French girls said innocently: "Edith, why did Pierre Pontrincourt leave the River so strangely last night. We want him so much now, and he is your best partner." But too proud to swerve from the truth, much as it just then provoked her, she said coldly: "I do not at all know why he is away at present."

The girl who had questioned her, looked surprised. She said nothing in reply, though she was quick to perceive that Edith's cheek had lost its clear cool hue. There was a deep though delicate flush upon it, and a cold resolute look upon the usually radiant mouth, that women easily interpret in such circumstances.

But Mary Merton, whose birthday they were met to celebrate, stood by; and having been to the Pontrincourt house through the day, where she had heard Pierre's absence explained as his father desired; glancing maliciously at Edith, said in a cool authentic way: "He has gone with the sloop to 'Pesiquid,' to bring Gabrielle Pipon to dance at our harvest fêtes. She promised Lucie Pontrincourt to come this Autumn; so, although Pierre is Edith's favourite, she will have to share him with Gabrielle."

"Bah!" said the spirited little Acadian who had first spoken. "If Edith does not know why Pierre went so

suddenly to 'Pesiquid,' neither does any girl in 'Molanson.' Our Deputies have frequent need to communicate with the English Forts, and Henri Pontrincourt is not likely to tell all the women in the Village, should his son go upon such an errand."

Mary Merton was jealous of Edith's beauty and superiority; and replied with apparent carelessness: "Perhaps not, but all the women in the Village know, that the Pontrincourts wish Pierre to marry Gabrielle, and she is quite pretty enough to make him wish the same thing. Besides she is of his own people, and religion; and we English heretics, at least have no chance as her rivals."

"I tell you, Mary Merton," said the French girl, with a passionate flurry in her lovely brown face, "that Pierre Pontrincourt will marry neither you, nor I, nor Gabrielle Pipon; and if we desired that he should, there are English heretics, as you, not I called them, whose rivalry any one of us might dread."

Mary Merton remembered that she was talking to her guests, and answered smoothly, but with a covert insolence, intended to convey that she had never contemplated Edith as Pierre's future wife: "Well, Marie, we will not quarrel about it, and, as you say, neither you nor I are to marry him, he and Gabrielle will show us in good time their own decision, whatever that may be."

Edith Leceister was assailed in the most vulnerable quarter. She had no poor vanity, but pride was almost the strongest element of her nature, great and generous as that nature was. In her, this pride was not so much

a blemish as a passion, that in its slumber, lent stateliness to her beauty and dignity to her daily life. She disdained to mingle in the conversation of the girls, respecting Pierre's absence, and felt Marie's evident sympathy as great an aggravation of her anger, as her countrywoman's malice.

In her heart, she had no real doubt of her lover. She knew that no Gabrielle in the wide world, could be what she had already been, in his heart and eyes. His unexacting, and lavish devotion, had taught her too well, her own power; she knew that she was loved, with that love which once given cannot be reclaimed; and, that hers was the irresistible sway in which he gloried.

Had it been otherwise,—had Mary Merton's words, struck her with the terror of losing him,—her hard and bitter pride would have been quenched in that sea of agony; but there was no real fear, to show Edith her own deathless love; that lay wrapt up in her very life, silent, because secure; leaving her for the time to the dominion of its foe.

When Edith reached home that night, she looked down the River, to the broad waters of 'Minas,' that rippled and glittered in the full moonlight, like the waves of fairy-land; and with human inconsistency, was angry that Gabrielle should sail through such a lovely tide with Pierre Pontrincourt, though she scorned to fear her as a rival. The villages, even then, almost a century ago, followed the Valley up the mountain, and stood shining peacefully in the pale brilliance. The scattered groves made picturesque shadows among the cleared lands, that lay softly under the dark unbroken ridges of the opposing

mountains; and the native elm, in its surpassing beauty, fringed the banks of the River, that came down, radiant and musical as 'Undine,' from the far heart of the hills. But Undine's melodies were powerless upon the heart of the haughty woman, who was too familiar with such enchantments, and too little tried by sorrow, to be thankful for their consoling wiles.

In the meantime, Pierre Pontrincourt's information had been civilly but coldly received by the English Officer in command at 'Pesiquid;' and his minute explanations, regarding the arranged route of the Indians, and their probable plan of attack upon the troops then on march, were, if not precisely disregarded, treated with no very grateful attention. The Acadians were looked upon with suspicion, by the English settlers at Halifax, and were not likely to receive more considerate judgment from the soldiers who were stationed among them, in no friendly attitude. They were believed to be always willing to act in concert with the savages, if they dared, and to be only restrained from openly rising with them, by the fear of ultimate ruin, as they were in no position to defend successfully their large and valuable possessions in the Province, should they provoke actual hostilities with the Government. It is probable, that views such as these, rendered the English at 'Pesiquid,' careless of the information furnished by old Henri Pontrincourt; although they found rapid reason to regret their distrust, as the troops in question, having no warning of their danger, were surprised where they had bivouacked for the night, and were, every man, scalped or taken prisoner by their vigilant enemy.

In a few days, the white sails of the shallop came

glancing up the Gaspereaux, bringing the bright young Pesiquid belle, to be welcomed and petted by her friends, and kindred at 'Molanson.' To Pierre Pontrincourt, she was Gabrielle Pipon, related to him by some far off and unintelligible cousinship. Very charming, and sweet, he believed her to be; but he admitted it with as little personal interest as he acknowledged the beauty of some lovely old picture. Just then, he hardly knew anything about her numerous perfections; he was on his way to the Leceister Cottage, while his sister Lucie was still rejoicing over Gabrielle's arrival; and 'heavenly Una' herself would not have lured him from the familiar road.

But Edith had seen the approach of the sloop, and knew what would follow. She found means, too, of making sure that Gabrielle had been Pierre's companion from 'Pesiquid,' and was then at the Pontrincourt House. So, she sat watching, beneath a crescent-shaped group of willows, as she had often watched before, till she saw Pierre's tall light figure, coming rapidly up the gentle slope that skirted the Cottage. She turned paler than common, and for a moment, longed to stay, and hear his tender explanations, and apologies. But she thought of the cause assigned by Mary Merton, for his voyage; and remembered with a renewal of her resolution, that her words had been partly, if not wholly, true; for he had brought back Gabrielle. She knew perfectly well that the girl had spoken in mere envy, but she could not forgive Pierre for leaving her ignorant of that with which Mary seemed so familiar.

As the young Frenchman drew nearer, she rose, and passed quickly backward through the trees; and without

speaking of her intention within the Cottage, went into the Village by a footpath, completely screened, as was common in these settlements, by the favorite Willow of the Acadians. She was anxious to see the Pesiquid beauty, and eager to be among the first to offer her the customary courtesies of their simple mode of life. She was determined to show Mary Merton, and Pierre also, that she had no quarrel with the new visitor; and, having no real fear of the young stranger's influence, saw, without pain that her piquant loveliness and grace had not been exaggerated by her admirers. Like all women of her kind, she felt extreme pleasure in the beauty of her own sex; and shewed her appreciation of Gabrielle, so unaffectedly and cordially, that she won the tender little French girl's heart, at her first visit.

Pierre stayed long at the Cottage, hoping for Edith's return, as she knew he would,—and she did likewise in the Village; and successfully evading him on her return home, felt, as the night closed over the Valley, triumphant at his disappointment.

But Pierre was not so manageable, as Edith imagined. He made unlimited allowance for her displeasure, and would not be offended until she should hear his defence; and in her daily paths, and at the evening dances, he was continually near her, recalling their old intercourse, with such earnest, though silent tenderness, that her heart shook with delight, at being so beloved; and rendered the continuance of the manner she had adopted towards him, very difficult. But Edith had rashly and angrily declared to herself, that she would repulse his love, and silence his disclosures; and crushing every transient, relenting, she

kept well her unreasonable vow. She extended the words and manner of ordinary civility, when she encountered him: and wounded him far more deeply in doing so, than if she had totally shunned his society. But when he spoke entreatingly at her side, as he perpetually did, she turned to him a face so cold and imperious, that he would turn away from her, sick at heart, and come back again and again, to meet the same misery.

So the harvest time came on, and the yellow uplands were gay with the happy villagers, securing their abundant crops: for the kindly, simple community, toiled together, like one large family, and each man's fields were anxiously cared for, by his neighbours. Along the swelling borders of the River, the Acadian men and women, in their picturesque Norman garb, were grouped, and sprinkled through the luxuriant grain; reaping, binding, and piling up the golden stooks.

Nearer the River, the meadow, marsh and dyked lands, stretching in broad undulating belts of vivid and changeful green, that varied with every fleeting hour of the fervent Autumn heaven, were strewn and speckled with the sleek, numberless cattle of the Valley, that roamed at pleasure, through the short, sweet after-grass.

Beyond the reapers, and between the wooded brows of the mountains, and the outskirts of the scattered hamlets—nooks, and half-cleared patches of green pasturage, were spotted with countless sheep, that lay here and there, like the small white clouds on the skies of lustrous summer. But storms were brooding over the happy Valley, while the guiltless, unconscious people, danced in the moonlight, and gathered their harvest in the sun.

The Colony and Government at Halifax, were exasperated by the continued treachery and violence of the Indians; and though the good faith of the Acadians, was in many instances undoubted, the English found it very difficult to relieve themselves of the relentless enemies, who held retreats and strongholds in almost every French settlement and harbour, from one extremity of the Province to the other. These places being all the time professedly neutral, when difficulties occurred between France and England.

The story of the sudden summons to the "men, young and old," in the districts of 'Minas,' and 'River Canard,' to appear on the fifth of September, 1755, at the Church of Grand Pre, is too familiarly known to need any repetition here.

The Pontrincourts, father and son, were among those unhappy Acadians, who assembled unsuspectingly to hear the decision of the English King, upon some matter, as they imagined, of internal government; and heard the decree which forfeited their wealth, and banished them from the land, to which their feelings clung so passionately, with the fortitude and patience characteristic of the Acadian people in misfortune.

The men collected at Grand Pre Church, which was converted into an arsenal, for the time, being retained as prisoners, obtained from Colonel Winslow, who was engaged in the painful duty of removing them from the Province, permission to choose a few of their number, to return to the several villages, to relieve in some measure the extreme distress of their families, and to make the best arrangements possible in their wretched condition, for



leaving the Country together. There was no chance of resistance, so secretly had their ruin been accomplished. And even the few, who, in the despair and unbearable misery of leaving their beloved homes, fled, scarce knowing what they did, to the forest, with some undefined intention of seeking shelter among the Indians, were so effectually hunted and wrought upon by the threats, freely applied to their captive relatives, that they mostly gave themselves up, before the day appointed for the general embarkation.

Captain Leceister, though a faithful English subject, made no concealment of his commiseration for the unfortunate people with whom he had lived so long, though he could give them no actual aid. And he had promised old Henri Pontrincourt, who had been deputed by his fellow prisoners to return for a few hours to 'Molanson,' to take means to prevent his separation from the women of his family, at the time of departure.

Five vessels of transport, had been lying for some days in the Gaspereaux, waiting to receive the miserable Acadians, who were to be distributed, utterly destitute, among the older British Colonies.

Upon the wisdom or the cruelty of this measure, it is needless now to offer an opinion. These people, very probably, constituted a dangerous element in the heart of a young and struggling English Colony; but the sudden and total disruption of their beautiful and prosperous settlements, seems to have been, if necessary, to say the least, a terrible necessity. Their lands, crops and cattle were confiscated to the English Crown; money and household goods they were permitted to retain. But these

latter were precisely the things of which they had least. In their primitive way of life, they were unfamiliar with money, bartering their produce and simple manufactures with each other, according to their necessities, and exchanging in the same manner with the French and English traders, whose vessels were even then frequent upon our coasts. Of their household goods, they could make little profit; there was no provision for the conveyance of cumbrous property; and what articles of value their dwellings contained, were not easily portable.

From these circumstances, it is easy to perceive that the extremity of poverty was added to their other afflictions; and that the cheerful ease and abundant comforts of their former life, rendered them peculiarly unfitted to bear the sudden transition to which they were exposed. Many, in the confusion, and hurry of the general expulsion, were parted for ever, from their nearest relatives; and some died, even before they could be embarked, from fatigue, grief, and exhaustion.

Captain Leceister had not failed to secure to the Pontrincourts the only remaining alleviation of their sorrow; and much of their destitution and pain was forgotten in the privilege of suffering together. The old Englishman saw the ruin of the friends who had been kind and faithful to him, in their prosperity, with an aching and indignant heart; and when he was about to leave them, his clear blue eyes were thick with tears, as he clasped the generous hand of Henri Pontrincourt, and said simply: "Remember me, old friend, if I can ever help you." He turned last to Pierre, saying, tenderly, as he thought of his fair child at home: "God bless you, my son;" and passed

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quickly over the side of the vessel, to the boat that waited to carry him to shore.

The tenth day of September was fixed for the sailing of the transports,—and upon the night previous, these vessels were crowded with the Acadian prisoners. Very few of these had escaped, and troops were stationed through the late inhabited districts, to secure any such, who might linger in the vicinage of their desolate homes. The beautiful villages upon the Gaspereaux, were burning,—the crops and cattle in possession of the soldiery,—and the soft vale, but a few hours before so luxuriant and lovely, a wide scene of devastation.

The few English houses, of course, were spared, but their owners were powerless on behalf of the helpless fugitives.

Late in this evening, Pierre Pontrincourt told his father that he must see Edith Leceister again. That, not being strictly guarded, now that they were on ship-board, he thought it very possible to drop from the vessel unperceived, and swimming to the bank of the River, make his way cautiously up the shore to 'Molanson.'

The old man knew the danger of the enterprise, but was wise enough to know also that Pierre's heart had a right to be heard in its extremity, and silently parted with his son, who promised to return, as he went, long before morning.

Pierre reached the shore safely, unslung from his neck and hastily adopted the light dry raiment and noiseless moccasins, carefully protected from the water with a lover's forethought. Then creeping silently up the beach, descried in a few minutes a lurking canoe upon the edge

of the River. This was as he had expected, for he knew that the Indians, not daring to approach the transports, would be likely to secrete themselves around the neighboring shores, in their anxiety to learn the fate of the Acadians. Sure of a friend, Pierre came rapidly forward, speaking a few low Indian words to a figure lying motionless, but watchful, in the bottom of the canoe,—and was very soon silently paddling up the stream to ‘Molañson.’

That pretty village was now a smoking ruin,—and the few English houses which had escaped the late desolation, softened but little the traces of the general havoc that surrounded them.

The cottage of the Leceisters stood upon a bold upland slope, overlooking the River, and on the night of which I speak, Edith sat upon the rustic bench beneath the group of willows, that sheltered one side of the lowly dwelling. She sat there, cold, white, and silent, as the full moon above her, watching the vessels that lay like gilded toy-ships, with every delicate line defined and mirrored on the glittering water below.

The late calamity, so terrible to those whom it had more immediately befallen, had seemed to spare her; but now, in its first shock, she felt as if she alone were stricken. She sat, with limbs and features rigid and colorless, bravely, almost fiercely, holding off the reality of her misery. The ruin of her gentle neighbours,—the horrors that had invaded their peaceful, pleasant homes,—were things for future grief. There was but one fixed thought in the tumult of her heart and mind. “He was not yet gone;” “Not yet, not yet;” “she must see him again;” and clinging to that isolated spar of hope, with a tenacity that

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told of that abyss of despair at which she would not look, she neither knew, nor cared, what was to come after.

In the meantime, Pierre had landed immediately below, and was quickly nearing her through the willow-covered field foot-path. He felt almost sure of finding her in the old accustomed place; and if he did not know the extent of her love for him, he knew that she was too true and generous a woman to repulse him then.

As he parted the branches, and stood beside her, and said, "Edith," she turned to him with a short gasping cry, that woke all the passionate tenderness of his unselfish nature. He took her in his arms, and sitting gently down beside her, forgot all his own care. He soothed her with soft hushed kisses, and low, unconnected, fervent words, while, with all her pride and strength gone, she clasped her hands about his neck, and sobbed upon his breast. At last she said: "Forgive me, Pierre;—say you will forgive me;—say that you love me now." He wrapped and folded her in his arms, as though he would never loose them again, as he replied: "My darling, my darling, you will break my heart. Love can bear immeasurable wrong, and you did me none; the offence was mine, though I did not mean it; and when you held aloof from me, I loved you, and longed for you, more dearly, and continually, than ever I did before; and I came to-night, my own, solely to tell you this. My poor old father is in such fear for me, now, that if we had parted kindly, before I went to 'Grand Pre,' for his sake, I might not have risked the coming to shore."

He instantly regretted his last words, for a new terror seized Edith. "Pierre, Pierre," said she, "the posts are

everywhere about the villages; and the soldiers have orders to shoot any of the Acadians found on shore." "They are careful of us," said the young man bitterly, as he thought for a moment of his desolate people. "But they shall not shoot me to-night, Edith;" he added cheerfully: "I will get back as safely as I came, dearest."

But why need I say more of this last parting. To the well-regulated eyes and ears of chill indifference, such details are silly, and not quite proper. To those who, in their day have waded through the like deep waters, they are often painful. Comforted, in sorrow's despitè, Edith at length remembered that Pierre must leave her. She was the first to speak of his return to the ship, warning him that he would scarcely reach the anchorage before morning. In that last hour, she sustained and strengthened him, freely promising to go with him, at some happier time, to the new home he hoped to make in a more merciful land.

Pierre sped rapidly downward to the River, through the familiar field-paths, and succeeded in avoiding the sentinels, until he reached a narrow track that skirted the stream. The posts were numerous upon the edge of the River, in expectation of deserters from the transports; and suddenly, as he turned a curve of the solitary path, he encountered a soldier, face to face.

Pierre saw, instantaneously, that there was no chance of retreat; his accent would betray him, if he attempted to answer the challenge of the sentinel, and without the hesitation of a moment, he endeavoured to rush past his enemy, and gain the shelter of the bushes that bordered the water. But the effort only accelerated his fate; the

soldier wheeled upon him as he quickened his steps, and fired. Pierre fell forward, shot mortally; the ball had taken him between the shoulders, passing through the lungs, and in a few minutes his pain was over for ever.

The narrator of this simple tale of sorrow, has not much more to tell. Captain Leceister saw the young Frenchman buried in the grave-yard of his people at 'Molanson,' and tried to soften the manner of his death to the heart-broken Pontrincourts, before they left the River. And Edith looked upon the dead face of her lover, with the inexpressible tenderness of his last hours still lingering upon it, and told her own heart that she had killed him. She knew that he had risked his life, and lost it, to see her once more. Had there been no estrangement between them, when that sudden ruin came upon the Valley, the gentle Frenchwoman, whose genial affection she had so often sought, would not now have been robbed of the dearest prop and blessing of her declining life; nor the good old Henri, be going into exile mourning for his dead and only son—slain by her weak and irrational pride.

She knew how precious Pierre's life had been to his family, and that had he been sure of her love, as he was of her safety, he would have regarded their distress too much, to increase it by exposing himself to needless danger. He had explained to her, in their last interview, that had his escape from the ship been impossible, he would have found means of communication with her father, easily obtainable, upon his arrival in another Colony; and she now believed that he would have trusted to such a course, had it not been for her haughty anger.

Too late she remembered, his transparent and unworldly

faith,—the unconscious charm and power of his simple manliness, and caressing words,—the old delight, and lost repose of his daily presence,—and the unselfish tenderness of his love. And desperate, with grief and remorse, there were times when she felt that her punishment was more than she could bear.

But in calmer hours, she knew that he who had loved and forgiven her on earth, had not forgotten her in heaven; and sometimes she strove with her sorrow, and did not wilfully reject the consolations with which it was mingled; and they were more than fall to the lot of many, in similar self-reproach and pain. She knew that the poor passion that shrinks and shrivels from the soul, with its bodily garment, at the gates of death, had never swayed his spirit;—that his love had followed him through the dark Valley, and, stripped of all alloy, waited for her coming on the happy heights beyond.

But she was broken in heart, and spirit, for this world; and the shock of the general calamity, and the many terrors of the time, contributed to develop a latent delicacy of system, inherited from her mother. And before the next September sun shone over the Valley, Captain Leceister had laid his 'White Rose' among the lonely graves of the dead Acadians of 'Molanson.'



## AUTUMN IN NOVA SCOTIA.

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CALM lies the land, and prosperous, and fair,  
Reposing in this lustrous Autumn air,  
Robed with the lavish glory of the time,  
And bountiful as Eden in its prime—  
Beneath the canopy of golden haze,  
So gently held by these soft harvest days.  
The pleasant homesteads lie, 'mid orchard trees,  
Rip'ning in viewless beautiful degrees  
That leave 'Laquille's'\* famed apples rosy-brown,  
And bring the 'Minas' plum its purple down.  
On wide warm upland fields, the reaper leaves  
To fanning winds, the encampment of his sheaves;  
While sunny mountain-sides beyond, retain  
The pale brown slopes of undulating grain.  
In meadows low, the binder's hand resumes  
Its task amid the glossy oaten plumes;  
Or piles the stook among the barley-ears,  
'Till, from afar, the mid-day horn he hears.  
Up broken dells, where fragrant fern is deep,  
The rich ripe bramble-berries thickly creep;  
The schoolboy, from his only care released,  
Comes with the wild-bird to that dainty feast;  
The soft sweet brooks go singing thro' the grass,  
Laving the Alder tassels as they pass,—  
Showing the late wild rose her crimson blush,  
In clear pools sleeping in the noontide hush;

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\* River Laquille, now Allan's River, Annapolis.

And woodland groves amid the culture stand,  
 Casting a tender shadow on the land.  
 Where level marshes stretch away below,  
 Wandering at will, the peaceful cattle go,  
 Cropping the young grass where the scythe has been.  
 Or basking in a patch of golden green.  
 And soft bright prairies, rescued from the sea  
 By the lost Frenchmen of old Acadie,  
 Are dotted with more distant herds, and gleam  
 In the still sunlight, like a pastoral dream.

Across the 'Minas' water's restless sweep,  
 See lofty Blomidon's majestic steep;  
 But gladly turn we to the gentler shore,  
 Adorned by daily care, and Poet's lore.\*  
 Nor ever in meet honour, song shall flow,  
 For thy dark glittering waters, 'Gaspereaux.'  
 First rushing grandly through the narrow bed,  
 Cleft in the stern old mountains overhead;  
 'Till the land softens, when with frequent gleam  
 Through parted boughs, descends the rapid stream,  
 Whose verdant borders gently swell to yield  
 The thriving villager his yellow field.  
 Then winding slowly, where the cliffs recede,  
 And the Elms follow through the sunny mead—  
 The clear soft wave a wider Channel fills,  
 And leads the emerald Valley down the hills.

On heavy branches fruit is ripe and rare,  
 The od'rous quince hangs by the luscious pear,—  
 And cool sweet grapes in dark blue clusters fall,  
 By crimson peaches on the shelter'd wall.  
 Far up the River, now the flails resound,—  
 And farther lies the fresh and furrow'd ground,  
 Which shadowed late by mountain maple bough,

\* Longfellow's "Evangeline."

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The 'venturous axe hath given to the plough.  
From cottage casement, now remote, now near,  
Familiar murmurs greet the loit'rer's ear ;  
Through the huge loom the rattling shuttle flies,  
Mingling the warp and woof's contrasting dyes ;  
Or leaving, as the soft bleached threads unwind,  
The housewife's shining flaxen web behind.  
Such homely sounds the season's charm prolong,  
On light airs floating pleasantly along.

Now with advancing chill of eve and morn,  
Comes the bright sickle to the Indian's corn,  
That sways, like summer billows, darkly green,  
On ridges where the fervent sun has been.  
The time is nigh when at the husking floor,  
The village maidens strip the gathered store ;  
And love, though scornful of the jest they hear,  
To find the still prophetic rosy ear.  
Now the flax-breakers, from the shaded soil  
Send forth the pleasant clatter of their toil,—  
Blent with the honest mirth, and kindly tone  
Of rustic gossip, 'till the day is gone.  
Then gaily gathering in the eventide,  
At simple feast, the household-board beside ;  
Rest they awhile—and when the night comes down,  
Music, and youthful merriment are grown  
To rule the transient hour from labour won,  
While sit the elders blithely looking on.  
Righteous, and wise of heart, and fair, and true,  
And faithful in the work they find to do,  
They meet Life's care with patient heart and hand—  
These rural men and women of the land.

Where massive trunks deep in the forest shade,  
Folded in ferny moss, are prostrate laid,  
Wreathed with wild flowers, so exquisite and frail,  
That the light trembles through each leaflet pale—

The shy Hare couches, and the Squirrel springs  
 For the sweet nut the laden beech-bough flings ;  
 The speckled Partridge steps with dainty feet,  
 And the Moose browses in his green retreat,—  
 Safe—while on turf still bright the warm rays fall—  
 From the train'd hound, and eager huntsman's call.

And silent, in the Indian Summer noon,  
 Or silvering 'neath the white late risen moon  
 That, like some wak'ning beauty, pale and proud,  
 Parts, as she comes, a sombre curtain-cloud—  
 Lie small unruffled Cove, and crescent Bay,  
 For fishing shallop on its homeward way ;  
 The shoreman's skill the great deep doth not foil :  
 His bark comes laden with the briny spoil.  
 Down the rude coast the scatter'd hamlets reach  
 Their low white walls to the broad glitt'ring beach,  
 Where the wave leaves that pink and tiny shell  
 Whose hue the fisher children love so well ;  
 The sun-burnt children, that by winter fire,  
 Shall hear, with eager eyes, their browner sire  
 Tell of the Voyage past, the dark fierce shore.  
 And lingering July day of ' Labrador.'

To their own shadows, now red branches wave,  
 Across thy bosom, picturesque ' Lahave ;'  
 And in the fancy of this dreamy time,  
 I see the grace that may elude my rhyme :  
 But other songs in future Autumn light,  
 Shall ask thy charm to make their numbers bright ;  
 By thee adorned, then, may the skillful strain  
 Bestow the meed my verse essays in vain ;  
 In the still evening shall the singing bird,  
 Answering his kind, among the leaves be heard,  
 The warbling Mavis the soft pause shall fill  
 That breaks the plaintive strain of Whistling-Will,  
 The sweet grey Linnet keep his famous tale,

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