FROM "THE LIFE OF A LITTLE COLLEGE & OTHER PAPERS" BY ARCHIBALD MACMECHAN - 1914 -

EVANGELINE AND THE REAL ACADIANS

I

Man is a lover and maker of myths. From prejudice, from chivalry, from patriotism, from mental sloth, from sheer inability to know the thing which is, and tell a plain tale, neither adding nor abating aught,--from what is best and from what is worst in his nature,--he cherishes legend, fable, romance, anything but the simple fact. There is one hard way of hitting the white, and there are ten thousand easy ways of roving from it. The clearest demonstration of sober, lazy-pacing history can never oust a pleasing fiction from the popular belief. Perhaps this is a necessary part of the sorry scheme of things. Perhaps the very reason for the existence of the actual is to furnish a foundation for our gorgeous dream palaces, wherein we spend our lives charmed by a splendour which is only painted air.

Fact and fiction are almost impossible to disentangle in the popular conception of that most pathetic incident, the forcible deportation of the French settlers from Nova Scotia by the English Government in 1755. They were removed, not exterminated,--as was the Huguenot colony in Florida by the Spaniards. They were a mere handful compared with the three hundred thousand French citizens dragooned out of France upon the revocation of the great Henry's edict. Theirs was not so hard a fate as that of the thirty thousand Tories driven into vagabond exile at the close of the Revolutionary War. Nobody pities the Huguenots or the Loyalists; but the sufferings of the Acadians are blown in every ear. All the world knows their sad story; for they have not lacked their sacred poet. When the Reverend Mr. Conolly told the story of the two parted Acadian lovers, and Hawthorne turned the material over to Longfellow, none of them could foresee the consequences of their action.

The immediate outcome was "Evangeline," published in 1847. It became popular; now, after more than sixty years, its popularity is greater than ever. Within twelve years, the American tourist noted engravings of Faed's Evangeline in the print-shops of Halifax. The poem had crossed the ocean, furnished inspiration to the artist, the picture of the heroine --a thoroughly English type--was engraved, and the prints were familiar on this side of the Atlantic within a very short time. "Evangeline" is the best-known poem "de longue haleine" ever written in America. Year after year thousands of Canadian and American school-children con the tale of the desolation of Grand Pré. The annotated editions for their use promise to extend into an infinite series. In the Canadian province farthest from the scene of the Expulsion, "Evangeline" has been removed from the school curriculum, lest it should mislead the youthful subjects of the British Crown. "Evangeline" has had the rare honour of being translated into French by a French Canadian: in 1865, Pamphile Le May published his version of it among his "Essais Poétiques." It has inspired historical studies like Casgrain's "Pélerinage au Pays d'Evangeline", wherein Longfellow's fanciful descriptions of Grand Pre are solemnly taken for matter of fact. The Expulsion is the life of the provincial historical society, and has been the theme of fierce polemic for many years. French and Catholics take one side, English and Protestants the other. "Evangeline" feeds the flame of controversy. "Evangeline" has even become a factor in business; it figures in countless advertisements. Astute managers of steamer and railway lines find their account in a poem that draws the tourist traffic. Every summer thousands of pilgrims from the United States crowd to Nova Scotia, and visit Grand Pré because it is the scene of Longfellow's touching idyll. Truly these are not slight results from telling a story to a literary man, more than half a century ago.

The love of one's own country is a strange and beautiful thing. It cannot really concern us what was done or suffered by our fellow countrymen a century and a half ago; but French and English still take sides and wage paper wars over this question of the Acadians, their character, their relations with the British Government, and the justice or injustice of their banishment. The expelled Acadians, the men who planned the Expulsion, the men who carried it out, the men who profited by their removal, are all in their graves.

"There let their discord with them die."

Let us proclaim the truce of God to the combatants in this wordy warfare, and try to look at the whole matter with clear eyes, unblinded by the mists of prejudice and passion.

II

Acadia is the name of the old French province, with ill-defined boundaries, corresponding roughly to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick at the present day. The settlers were Acadians, and a hundred thousand of their descendants are proud to bear that distinctive name. They are a people apart, and differ widely in character from the French of Quebec. The serious "plantation" of the country began in 1670, after the Treaty of Breda; and the period of French ownership and colonization lasted exactly forty years, until the capture of Port Royal by Colonel Francis Nicholson and a force of New Englanders in 1710. The Acadians held their lands from seigneurs to whom they paid "rents" in kind, and other feudal dues like "lods et ventes", and fines of alienation, as in old France.

The story of French rule in Acadie is not a pleasant one, as told with masterly clearness in the pages of Parkman. It is a tale of incompetence, corruption, and pettiness. The officials were at odds with the priests over the liquor traffic with the Indians. As the most exposed and vulnerable portion of the French possessions, it was raided time and again by expeditions from New England to avenge the "petite guerre" of privateers and Indian forays from Canada. It was only under English rule, in the long peace that followed the Treaty of Utrecht, that the Acadians increased and multiplied, pressed upon the means of subsistence, and swarmed out into new settlements. The small English garrison at Annapolis Royal was powerless to affect their development, for good or evil; and this alien people in a corner of the American wilderness owed their happiness to the policy of Walpole.

The Acadians enter the world of letters first in the pages of Raynal. That unfrocked Jesuit had never been in America. His "History of Settlements and Trade in the East and West Indies" is largely the work of other hands. Diderot is said to have written as much as one third of it; and Diderot had a definite aim and intention in writing. He wished to criticize the existing state of things in France by the implicit contrast of a more ideal state of things elsewhere. The same motive has been attributed to Tacitus in writing his "Germania". As a rebuke to a corrupt civilization, both historians paint the picture of a primitive society, unspoiled by conventions and endowed with the rough and simple virtues. Man in a state of nature was a favourite subject of the "philosophes". Distance lent enchantment. The virile Germans dwelt far from Rome, in the forests of northern Europe, and the simple Acadians (read Arcadians), children of nature, beyond the Atlantic, among the few arpents of snow. Raynal was not actually the first begetter of this legend of a "lambish peple, voyded of alle vyce"; he had something to go on, the account of a visiting priest, which he improved and embroidered. His version is so important, and so seldom seen that it may be worth while to reproduce a few significant parts of it:-

> Not more than five or six English families went over to Acadia, which still remained inhabited by the first colonists, who were only persuaded to stay upon a promise made them of never being compelled to bear arms against their ancient country. Such was the attachment which the French then had for the honour of their country. Cherished by the Government, respected by foreign nations, and attached to their king by a series of prosperities, which rendered their name illustrious and aggrandized their power, they possessed that patriotic spirit which is the effect of success. They esteemed it an honour to bear the name of Frenchmen, and could not think of foregoing the title. The Acadians therefore, in submitting to a new yoke, had sworn never to bear arms against their former standards.
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> The neutral French had no other articles to dispose of among their neighbours, and made still fewer exchanges among themselves, because each separate family was able and had been used to provide for its wants. They therefore knew nothing of paper currency, which was so common throughout the rest of North America. Even the small quantity of specie which had stolen into the colony did not promote circulation, which is the greatest advantage that can be derived from it.
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> Their manners were of course extremely simple. There was never

a cause, either civil or criminal, of importance enought to be carried before the court of judicature at Annapolis. Whatever little differences arose from time to time among them were amicably adjusted by their elders. All their public acts were drawn by their pastors, who had likewise the keeping of their wills, for which, and for their religious services, the inhabitants gave them a twenty-seventh of their harvests.

These were sufficient to supply more than a sufficiency to fulfil every act of liberality. Real misery was entirely unknown, and benevolence prevented the demands of poverty. Every misfortune was relieved, as it were, before it could be felt; and good was universally dispensed, without ostentation on the part of the giver, and without humiliating the person who received. The people were, in a word, a society of brethren, every individual of which was equally ready to give and receive what he thought the common right of mankind.

So perfect a harmony naturally prevented all those connections of gallantry which are so often fatal to the peace of families. There never was an instance in this society of an unlawful commerce between the two sexes. This evil was prevented by early marriages; for no one passed his youth in a state of celibacy. As soon as a young man came to the proper age, the community built him a house, broke up the lands about it, and supplied him with the necessaries of life for a twelvemonth. Here he received the partner he had chosen, and who brought him her portion in flocks. This new family grew and prospered like the others. They altogether amounted to eighteen thousand souls.

There were twelve or thirteen hundred Acadians settled in the capital; the rest were dispersed in the neighbouring country. No magistrate was ever appointed to rule over them; and they were never made acquainted with the laws of England. No rents or taxes of any kind were ever exacted from them. Their new sovereign seemed to have forgotten them; and they were equally strangers to him.

This is about as veracious as Barrere's account of the sinking of the "Vengeur"; but it serves its end; the state of the Acadian "habitants" was almost the exact opposite of the state of the French peasants. Raynal's literary influence works in a straight line, easily traced from end to end. In 1829, Judge Haliburton published in two volumes his history of Nova Scotia. The author was destined to become famous as the creator of "Sam Slick". That a history of this size and plan should have been written and published so early in the development of so small a community as Nova Scotia is a token of the strong local patriotism which has long characterized that seaboard province. When Haliburton wrote, the modern school of history was unborn. Macaulay had not written a line of the work that was to displace the novels on all the ladies' dressing-tables in England. Freeman, Stubbs, and Gardiner were yet to unfold the true doctrine of historical accuracy, research, and criticism of sources. In Haliburton's time, Hume was still the model historian, and Hume wrote history lying on a sofa. The "History of Nova Scotia" is largely a compilation; the second volume is taken over bodily from Bromley; and Akins helped to put it together. The continuous narrative ceases with 1763; what follows are mere notes, as dry as the entries of a mediaeval annalist in his chronicle. At the time of writing the author represented a constituency largely Acadian, and was their champion in the local legislature. He therefore can hardly be blamed for copying freely from this passage of Raynal's already quoted:-

Out of olde bookes, in good feith,
Cometh al this newe science that men lere.

Now Longfellow used Haliburton in his studies for "Evangeline"; but he was not the first American to avail himself of this material for the purposes of fiction. In 1841, Mrs. Catherine Williams published at Providence a novel called "The Neutral French, or the Exiles of Nova Scotia. This tale is an interesting illustration of the old robust detestation of everything British that flourished in the United States well on to the end of the century. The preface states expressly that the book is

based on Haliburton, and further assures the reader that "the manner in which he became possessed of most of the facts proves most incontestably that it was the design of the British Colonial Government at least that all memory of this nefarious and dark transaction should be forgotten."

The first part of "The Neutral French" deals with the Expulsion, which is avenged in the second part by the overthrow of British power at the Revolution. Chapters have mottoes from "The Deserted Village"; and the few rough wood-cut illustrations have been taken from some early edition of that famous poem. The life of the simple peasants is given an Arcadian colouring, anticipating Longfellow's idyll. The connection is hardly accidental. It has been confidently stated that Longfellow used this novel in the composition of "Evangeline". (See Cozzens' "Acadia, or a Month with the Bluenoses.") If so, "sweet Auburn" must be regarded as the prototype of Grand Pré, also the "loveliest village of the plain." Thus "Evangeline" reaches out one hand to "The Deserted Village" and the other to "Hermann und Dorothea." The chain of literary causation from Raynal to Longfellow is complete. It would even seem that Haliburton influenced Longfellow, not only directly, but also indirectly through the forgotten tale of Mrs. Williams.

III

The great difficulty under which all writers on the Acadian question have hitherto laboured is imperfect acquaintance with the original sources of information. Though Nova Scotia has a good collection of materials for a provincial history, comprising nearly six hundred volumes of manuscript, carefully arranged, catalogued, and indexed, it has not been easy of access. An excellent selection from these was edited by Akins in 1869, and extensively used by Parkman in his "Montcalm and Wolfe". The French controversialists accuse Akins of partiality, and write still under the influence of Raynal, Haliburton and Longfellow. This is not the way to arrive at the truth.

It has been my good fortune during a long residence in Nova Scotia to have special opportunities for studying the primary authorities; and I have edited two volumes of provincial archives. Both throw light on the Acadian question. The first is a calendar of the governor's letter-books, and a commission-book kept at Annapolis Royal; the second is a verbatim reprint of the minutes of the council. Together they cover the period between 1713 and 1741. A study of these documents enables me to correct many errors which are confidently repeated in book after book.

It is a thousand pities that neither Longfellow nor Parkman ever saw the country they described, particularly the sites of the old Acadian parishes. Some of their best passages would have gained in vigour and colour. Nova scotia, "that ill-thriven, hard-visaged, and ill-favoured brat," as Burke called her, is, in fact, largely composed of beauty-spots; and the loveliest part is the long, fertile valley of the Annapolis lying between the North and South Mountains, "New England idealized" a Yale professor called it, with the scenery of the Connecticut in mind. And of all the valley--the Happy Valley, with its thrifty orchards and fruit farms--the most beautiful part is the old town of Annapolis Royal and its "banlieue".

Grand Pré is classic ground; the great, wind-swept reaches of meadow and marsh-land beside the blue waters of Minas Basin, the desolation of the old French willows about the village well, are haunted with the sense of tears; but Annapolis town with its long, bowery street, its gardens and hedges, is a jewel for beauty and a hundredfold richer in historical associations. I shall never forget my first impression of the "garrison", as the old fort area is still called. The river was full from brim to brim with the red Fundy tide. The farther shore, "the Granville side," showed dim and shadowy and rich. Down the long street came a singing, tambourine-playing detachment of the Salvation Army. It was from that ground that Nicholson's New Englanders advanced in

triumph on the fort; there Rednap planted his batteries, and Du Vivier's Indians and Acadians attempted in vain to dislodge old Mascarene from his crumbling ramparts.

On the bridge across the ditch from the main gate, a boy and girl were talking and laughing as the sun set, making love, I suppose. Here gallant Subercase and his tiny force, after sustaining two sieges, marched out with the honours of war, drums beating and colours flying, between the lines of British grenadiers, when the white flag with the golden lilies came down for the last time on the 16th of October, 1710. In the twilight, a single ghostly sail glided up to the old, ruinous Queen's Wharf. This very defile saw Champlain's sails, Morpain's pirates, the quaint, high-sterned, dumpy craft of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, little French and English armadas of Sedgewick and Phips, La Tour and Charnisay. There at that very landing, the annual supply-ship from England discharged each autumn her nine months' scant allowance for the hungry garrison.

The fort itself is a Vauban plan, with a couple of ravelins added after the British occupation. The French engineers knew how to pick a site. This sandy hill looks over the Annapolis Basin, which defends it on one side, as the marsh and the little Lequille guard the other. The little town crouches in the lee of its defences; but it was sometimes taken in reverse. Within these walls, for forty years, one British governor after another laboured to hold the province for England, planned, diplomatized, held courts of justice, sustained sieges, gathered the king's rents, and strove to rule Acadie as an English province. Here Governor Armstrong, old and moody, "subject to fits of melancholy", was found dead in his bed with five wounds in his breast from his own sword, so resolute was he to have done with this unprofitable life. The hero of the whole occupation is Paul Mascarene, from the old Huguenot city of Castres. Wise, firm, capable, he has every one's good word. In 1710, he mounted the first guard in the captured fort. Thirty-nine years later, "old and crazy," as the brisk new governor called him, he marched the veterans of Philipps's regiment a hundred miles through the forest, to lay down his powers in the new capital of the province, which was building on the western shore of Chebucto Bay.

This pretty town, with memories of nearly three centuries, marked the headwaters of the stream of Acadian colonization. The original settlers came from lands about Rochelle, and here they found broad flats beside tidal waters, which they tilled as in old France. Between 1670 and 1755, one long lifetime, they increased from some three hundred souls to more than three times as many thousands. Within the shelter of Walpole's long peace, they multiplied rapidly and spread up the river, beside Minas Basin, across the Bay of Fundy.

IV

Their civil organization was mediaeval. They were liegemen of their seigneurs, to whom, as well as to the kind, they paid annual dues. Acadie was "a feudal colony in America," as Rameau names it. Captured in 1710, Port Royal was only formally ceded to England with the rest of Acadie, by the Treaty of Utrecht. Louis XIV was loath to part with it, for reasons easily understood. Acadie with Cape Breton was the extreme left, as Louisiana was the extreme right, of French power in America. It was nearest to France, the base of supplies, and nearest to the hated "Bastonnais". (N.B. So the Acadians still call the Bostonnais, or Americans). Acadie and Cape Breton were the outworks of Quebec, the citadel of New France; and from them it was easiest to strike New England. Ceded, however, the territory was by the twelfth article of this same treaty, which made it impossible that the Acadians could ever have been "neutral French," as they have been called. By international law, then as now, the people go with the territory.

The British governors spent much time in trying to persuade them to take an oath of allegiance, and at last they succeeded; but no oath was necessary. How Louis XIV would have laughed, after the cession of Alsace and Lorraine in 1681, to be told that the population were now "neutral Germans."

When the same provinces were handed back to Germany in 1871, what diplomat would have called their inhabitants "neutral French," or pretended that they were exempt from the necessity of bearing arms against France? Oath, or no oath, the Acadians in 1713 became British subjects, and if French emissaries, military, political, and ecclesiastical, had let them alone, there would have been no Expulsion and no "Evangeline."

The British administration of the province was a curious experiment. A handful of army officers tried to give an alien population civil government. Their efforts, though unsuccessful, illustrate the ingrained British respect for law and for legal forms. All power was vested in the govenor and his council. For the greatest part of this period, the governor, Philipps, a peppery old Welshman, who lived to be over ninety, dwelt in England, leaving the province in charge of a lieutenant-governor, who was always an officer in his regiment stationed in the fort. The Council's functions were chiefly advisory. The French inhabitants, being Catholics, could not, according to the law of England, vote or enjoy representative institutions.

They did, however, at the command of the governor, elect deputies, six or eight to the district. In order that each in turn might share the honour and burden of office, new deputies were chosen annually, on the 11th of October, when the crops were all in. These representatives of the people were to be men of property, the "ancientest" men, "honest, discreet, and understanding." On election, the new-made deputies were to come to the seat of government, with two of the outgoing members, to receive the governor's approbation and orders. They acted as intermediaries between the Government and the "habitants", and were responsible for the order and good behaviour of their several districts. They were required to carry out the decisions of the General Court, and enforce the proclamations of the governor. These were read out on Sunday after mass and affixed to the "mass-house" door. Sometimes the deputies had to act as arbitrators and examine disputed lands; or inspect roads and dikes; or assist the surveyor in determining boundaries. They had no powers save those conferred by the Government, but they were a fairly effective lever wherewith to move the mass of the population. British authority was never powerful. At first, it did not extend, in the picturesque phrase of the time, "beyond a cannon-shot from the walls of the fort." As time went on, it became supreme about Annapolis Royal, but it dimished in direct ratio to the distance from the centre. It was weak at Minas, weaker at Cobequid. At Chignecto it had reached the vanishing point.

It is often stated that there was no taxation of the Acadians by the British Government; but such is not the case. By 1730, the seigneurial rights of the various proprietors had been bought up by the Crown, and a determined effort was made to collect, for the benefit of His Britannic Majesty, all quit-rents, homages, and services of whatever kind, formerly paid to their respective seigneurs by the French of Minas and other places on the Bay of Fundy. The legal tender was "Boston money," which the Acadians would not take, preferring the French currency brought in by their clandestine trade with Cape Breton, which was hoarded and sent to Boston to be exchanged. These feudal dues were payable in the old days at the seigneur's mansion, "in kind,"--wheat and capons and partridges.

"Rent-gatherers" were appointed for the different districts. Alexandre Bourg de Bellehumeur, a former seigneur, was "Procoureur du Roy" at Minas. He was to render an account twice a year, to keep a rent-roll, to give proper receipts, and to pay over only to duly legalized authorities. He was to pay himself by retaining three shillings out of every pound. All the "contracts" were to be brought in to the governor, so that he might satisfy himself what was legally due in each case. There were naturally refusals, excuses, and delays, but rents were collected. After seven years, Bourg was replaced by Mangeant, who had fled from Quebec after killing his man in a duel. Three years later, Mangeant left the country, and Bourg was reinstated by Mascarene. Other "rent-gatherers" were Prudent Robichau for Annapolis Royal and the "banlieue," Joan Duon for the district along the river, and for Chignecto, James O'Neal, surgeon, from Cork, who had studied medicine at the college of Lombard at Paris and married an Acadian girl.

All these "rent-gatherers" were also notaries public. Besides their rent-rolls, they were to keep proper books of account, to take particular notice of all sales and exchanges, by whom and to whom alienated and transferred, to prevent frauds by clandestine deeds of exchange, to notify the Provincial Secretary of all sales, conveyances, mortgages, and agreements of exchange, that they might be properly registered, to report the presence of strangers, and to take cognizance of births, deaths, and wills, that intentions of testators might be duly carried out. This is civil administration in outline. Underlying all is a simple desire to establish law and order and to do justice between man and man.

V

Another erroneous statement frequently made is that the Acadians had few disputes, and those they brought to their parish priests for settlement. The fact is that these French peasants came to the British power for justice almost as soon as it was established in the land. The beginning of civil, as distinguished from martial, law, under British rule is due to the humanity and good sense of a forgotten lieutenant-governor, Thomas Caulfeild. He was apparently a cadet of the noble house of Charlemont, an old soldier who had seen service under Peterborough in Spain. He writes that he is "buried alive" in Nova Scotia, and he dies there in debt incurred in the maintenance of the Government. In a despatch to the Lords of Trade he states that there are no courts of judicature here. Evidently in the opinion of his superior officer, the hot-tempered and overbearing Nicholson, he had exceeded his powers, for Caulfeild writes further that he has tried to suit both parties, but that Nicholson asked to see the commission that authorized him to do justice in civil affairs; "to wch I answered that as I had ye Honour to Command in ye absence of ye Governor I Should allways endeavour to Cultivate as good an Understanding amongst ye People as possible believeing the same essential for his maj^{ties} Service, and tho' I had no Com^{n} for that Effect yet^{t} I held myself blamable to Suffer Injustice to be done before me without taking Notice thereof, haveing Never Interposed farther than by ye Consent of both Partyes." And he asks for instructions "on that head."

Caulfeild died soon after this, but apparently his suggestion did not fall to the ground. The fifth article of the next governor's commission empowered him "to adjudge and settle all claims and disputes in regard to land in the province." In the Broad Seal commission extending his powers, he is to "settle all questions of inheritance." Accordingly, Philipps writes to the Secretary of State that the governor and council have constituted themselves into a court on the model of the General Court of Virginia, to meet four times a year; for the idea that military government alone prevails, keeps settlers out of the country. Three members of the council were commissioned justices of the peace and empowered "to Examine and Enquire into all Pleas, Debates and Differences that are or may be amongst the inhabitants of Said Province." Ten years later, the governor writes to the notary of Minas regarding the people of that district and other distant parts of the province "coming in daily," with complaints against their neighbors, and failing to warn the "adverse partys" of their intentions. The determination to follow the forms of law and to act fairly is unmistakable even without the express declaration at the end: "I and gentlemen of the Council have no other Intention than to do Justice Impartially to you all." Next year he repeats his instructions to Bourg, If the defendants refuse to appear, the plaintiffs are to have certificates from the notary to that effect. The reason given is surely adequate: "The great Charge that persons praying for justice are put to By their Expensive Journeys from Such Remote parts of the Province as Yours."

The preamble to a general proclamation dated January 13, 1737-38, throws further light on the matter. It recites how it has been "customary" hitherto for the inhabitants to come to the governor and council for justice at all times, and, from "Ignorance or Design," fail to summon the defendants. This practice "hath been Exclaimed against by Several of the Inhabitants themselves not only as hurtfull & prejudicial to their private & Domestick affairs to be thus Hurried & Impeded by their Impatient, Cruel & Letigeous Neighbours, but even also very Troublesome, fatigueing and Inconvenient to the Governor & Council to be meeting daily and almost constantly to the Prejudice many times of their own Private Affairs to hear and examine their many frivolous and undigested complaints."

The proclamation accordingly fixes four days in the year for the hearing of causes, the first Tuesday in March and May and the last Tuesday in July and November. This is simply varying the dates fixed by Philipps in 1721. The chief point in the proclamation is an order that plaintiffs must lodge their complaints at the office of the Provincial Secretary and apply to him for the necessary summons to be sent to the defendants, in order that the latter might have at least three weeks' notice of proceedings against them. Again the aim is plainly to make procedure regular and to keep down the number of "frivolous and undigested complaints." That these were a real annoyance is clear from the irritable tone of the wording.

Not only was this administration of justice burdensome and forced upon the council by the nature of the Acadians, but it was carried on for years without fee or reward. In 1738, Armstrong and his council sent an important memorial to Philipps, in which they state that they have to the utmost of their capacity and power endeavoured to discharge their duty by an equal and impartial administration of justice, "Having never had any advantage or Salary for Our Acting as Members of his Majesty's Council for this Province."

These documents, which he never saw, more than justify Parkman in his general statement, "They were vexed with incessant quarrels among themselves arising from the unsettled boundaries of their lands." Richard, in quoting this passage, asks, "Could it be otherwise when the population was four times as large as it had been in 1713, when these lands had been divided and subdivided so as to leave nothing but morsels, and when the lands had never been surveyed by Government?" Here he is misled by Haliburton, who writes, "They had long since been refused adjudication upon their disputes in the local courts; their boundaries and the titles to their said lands were consequantly in great confusion." Both have erred through ignorance of the sources. The truth is the very opposite. The courts did "adjudicate" and their lands were surveyed.

VI

As early as 1728, David Dunbar, Esq., surveyor-general of His Majesty's woods in North America, is made surveyor of His Majesty's woods in Nova Scotia,--a very different place, apparently. His special duty was to set apart lands most fit to produce masts and timber for the royal navy. Dunbar appointed George Mitchell, "gentleman," his deputy. In 1732, Mitchell reported to Governor Armstrong the surveys he had made in the province between the Kennebec and St. Croix Rivers. Six townships had been laid out.

An order of Armstrong's dated July 20, 1733, directs Mitchell to survey the land on both sides of the Annapolis River, "from the Gutt upwards, Duely Distinguishing the Uninhabited lands from those belonging to the property of any particular person, whose Estates you are also to Survey, and to mark out the uncultivated lands of Each Estate from those that are Improven or inclosed." His discoveries in regard to wood and soil are to be transmitted to the Lords of Trade. Dunbar's instructions to Mitchell to proceed to Annapolis Royal, dated at Boston three years previous, direct him to report to the governor and show his commission and papers. His primary duty as king's surveyor is to select areas of large timber, particularly white pine, for masting, but if the situation of crown lands will interfere with settlements, he is to consult with the governor and report all such cases, duly attested, to Dunbar. He is to keep regular plans carefully in a special book, to make a plain and survey for each grantee, and also a detailed copy of each in the book aforesaid. The survey was intended to be careful and thorough.

Mitchell had a guard of soldiers given him against the Indians, as many as could be spared, and set to work. With the suspicion of peasants, the Acadians opposed the survey, and a special order had to be issued to them to mark out their boundaries. By April, 1734, Mitchell had completed his task, and was ordered by Armstrong to continue his work throughout the French settlements, as specified, all round the Bay of Fundy. Mitchell was employed apparently until 1735, after which Lieutenant Amherst acted as deputy surveyor. In 1739, Shirreff, the secretary, received strict orders to make out no patent except on the survey of Colonel Dunbar or of one of his deputies. The preamble shows that the greatest care was taken with the

grants and surveys.

The failure to assist in the work of the survey by planting stakes in their boundaries shows the character of the Acadians. They were French peasants of the eighteenth century, with no little admixture of Indian blood. They were simple, pious, and frugal; but they had the faults of their kind; they were ignorant and uneducated; few could even sign their names. They were led by their priests, who were naturally and inevitably political agents for France. In mental make, they must have been much the same as the peasants described by Arthur Young, except that they were not taxed to death to support a worthless king and court. They had the peasant's hunger for land, the peasant's petty cunning, the peasant's greed, all perfectly comprehensible in view of their hard, narrow life of toil. Their disputes over land were endless. Besides, the Government had to take action against the use of fraudulent half-bushel measures, against cheating in the length of cord-wood, against "clandestine deeds" and unlawful transfers of land. Proclamations were issued against neglect of fences, and failure to repair dikes. It was necessary to repeat orders frequently, for the obstinacy of the Acadian is proverbial. One ordinance forbade wild young fellows catching the horses loose in the fields and riding them about, to their great injury. Even Acadian boys would be boys. It must have been the dash of Indian blood that drove them to this prank, as it drove others to join Du Vivier against Mascarene, or to capture the vessel that was carrying them away from Acadie, or to live by privateering along the Gulf shore after the Expulsion. The Acadians were not the Arcadians of Raynal and Longfellow. They were human.

The character of the people, however, was hardly a factor in the political problem. Left to themselves, there would have been no problem. Such as it was, the mild, just English rule was solving it. The difficulties arose from the fact that the Acadians were French and Catholic in a province actually British and Protestant. That there should have been constant clashing between the Government and the priests should surprise no one. Grant them hum, with opposing national ends to advance, and the struggle follows as a matter of course.

Reverse the situation. Imagine Massachusetts conquered by France, ceded to her, and Boston held by a weak French garrison, powerless for good or evil, but maintaining a form of government. Imagine the Puritans guaranteed the exercise of their religion, but their ministers subject to the approval of a Vaudreuil or a Bigot. If the French historians, Rameau, Casgrain, Richard, had approached the subject after forming this mental picture, they would have taken a more charitable view of the English treatment of Acadie. One thing is unimaginable--that the men of Massachusetts would not meet and organize and fight.

The difficulty lay deeper still. The Acadians were moved helplessly hither and thither by hands far away in Quebec, in Versailles, in "the high chess game, whereof the pawn are men." They were mere tools of French policy, to be used, broken, and thrown aside in the secular struggle with England for the supremacy of the New World. But who will dare to re-tell the story that Parkman has told once for all?

Thanks to "Evangeline," the Expulsion will never be understood. That poem is responsible for the theory that the measure was a brutal, wanton, motiveless, irrational act of a tyrannical power upon an innocent people; and that power was Great Britain. Ultimately, it was the action of the Home Government, for no colonial governor would have incurred the expense,--for it cost money even in the eighteenth century to transport nine thousand people hundreds of miles,--to say nothing of the responsibility, without express orders.

But the plain truth is that New England must share that responsibility. The idea of the "removal" originated with Shirley, and the Governor of Massachusetts was urged repeatedly by him. The actual work of collecting the Acadians at Grand Pre was done by Winslow, a New England man. The firm that chartered the ships to carry them off was the well-known Boston firm of Apthorpe and Hancock. The Expulsion was not a local measure; it was for the defence of New England and all the other British colonies in America, as well as for Nova Scotia. The actual work of removing the unfortunate people was not harshly done. They were protected from the soldiers. As far as possible, families and villages were kept together on the transports.

VII

The Expulsion can be understood only in relation to the larger events of which it was a part. In 1755, England and France were preparing for the Seven Years' War, the climax of their century of conflict for America. It was a tremendous struggle, though its importance is obscured by the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. It gave England America and India; it drove France from two continents. On this side of the Atlantic, the war had actually begun, for Boscawen had captured the "Alcide" and the "Lys," and Braddock had been routed on the Monongahela. The war had begun, and begun with a great defeat for England; no one could tell how it would end.

In Nova Scotia, one corner of the world-wide battlefield, the British situation was anything but safe or reassuring. The French population outnumbered the English more than two to one. The great French fortress of Louisbourg was a city of ten thousand inhabitants. Twenty years of labour and millions of livres had been spent on its fortifications, which even in their ruins look formidable. It was the best-defended city in America except Quebec; and it was within easy striking distance of Halifax, the newly founded seat of British power. "The Dunkirk of America," it was stronger than ever, and was receiving supplies constantly from the Acadians.

French emissaries were busy among these unfortunate people, as they had been for forty years, teaching them that they had never ceased to be subjects of the King of France, that the return of the Pretender would restore Acadie to the French Crown, that remaining under British authority would mean loss of their priests, loss of their sacraments, loss of salvation. The infamous Le Loutre had forced many to retire to French territory, and they were in arms just across the border.

Acadians had joined invading French forces more than once. In view of the inevitable war, the presence of such a population ten thousand French, at the gates of Halifax, with their Indian allies murdering and scalping just outside the pickets, was a danger of the first magnitude. To disregard it was to court defeat, for the garrison at Halifax was thrust far up into the power of France, a nut in the jaws of a nutcracker. There was no force to bridle the Acadians. Fair words and fair measures had been exhausted. Nothing remained but to remove them out of the province.

Their deportation was a military necessity. It was cruel, as all war is cruel; the innocent suffered as they do in all war. The measure was precautionary, like cutting down trees and levelling houses outside a fort that expects siege, to afford the coming foe no shelter, and to give the garrison a clear field of fire.

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