

English ruthlessly broke in upon them, was just like a chapter out of the Golden Age. Let us see what is said of them by some contemporaries. By the general accounts of those who have seemed to consider them worth mention at all, they are represented as lazy, unenterprising, yet quarrelsome, very litigious and penurious. Governor Mascarene, himself a Frenchman born, but a British subject and a cautious writer, and one who always seems to have had a tender feeling for his born fellow-countrymen, says of them in 1720: "The French inhabitants are for the generality very little industrious, their lands not improved as might be expected, they living in a manner from hand to mouth, and, provided they have a good field of cabbages and bread enough for their families, with what fodder is sufficient for their cattle, they seldom look for much further improvement."

Lieut.-Governor Armstrong says of them: "Though they are a litigious sort of people, and so ill-natured to one another as daily to encroach upon their neighbours' properties, which occasions continual complaints, yet they all unanimously agree in opposing every order of Government, though never so conducive to their own interests." Again: "The French here upon every frivolous dispute plead the laws of Paris, and from that pretended authority condemn all the orders of the Government and follow the dictates of their priests and the Bishop of Quebec, etc."

We receive accounts of the quarrelsome and litigious character of these people from divers sources, English and French. Complaints of this litigious disposition are not rare, even in the representations of French officials at a time when Acadie was a French colony.

Here is another brief outline of the character and condition of these Acadians from a strictly French source. Messrs. De Beauharnois and Hocquart, in a letter to Count De Maurepas, dated at Quebec 12th September, 1745, among other things, say: "The Acadians have not extended their plantations since they have come under English dominion; their houses are wretched wooden boxes, without conveniences and without ornaments, and scarcely containing the most necessary furniture; but they are extremely covetous of specie. Since the settlement of Isle Royale they have drawn from Louisbourg by means of their trade in cattle, and all the other provisions, almost all the specie the King annually sent out; it never makes its appearance again, they are particularly careful to conceal it."

We find it mentioned by different authorities, sometimes in terms of contempt, that the French had made scarcely any attempt to clear up even the most fertile of the forest land; in almost a century they had not cleared the quantity of three hundred acres of woodlands; but had confined their crude operations in tillage to the rich, treeless marine alluvia, portions of which they had secured by rude dykes from the overflowing of the tides. The rude and slovenly character of these dykes may be seen even to-day. When their barns became cumbered with manure, they merely built others upon new sites.

Of course these French Acadians were grossly ignorant. We have before us a copy of a document signed by two hundred and twenty-seven of them, and of this whole number all except forty-nine are "marksmen." Still, this is not more than what might have reasonably been expected, everything being considered. We will only add—that all authorities are agreed upon—that these French, as well as their Indian associates, were devoted to, and under the unbounded control of, their priests. Perhaps, too, it was only natural to expect that, remembering the imperfections of even priestly nature, and the characteristic patriotism of Frenchmen, these priests could manage to exert over their Acadian flocks an influence always favourable to France. In that case, however, it was only reasonable to expect that they would refrain from complaining at the natural and just consequences of their interference. It is impossible to decide as to just what extent these priests should be held accountable for the perversity of the Acadian laymen in persisting to reside in a British country whilst defiantly refusing to take the Oath of Allegiance to the British Sovereign. One cannot decide; for, of course, the British rulers were not called upon to witness, in the broad light of day, the actual and tangible operation of the influence exercised by these priests over the people. That influence, when exerted adversely to those rulers, would assuredly only be employed as surreptitiously as was possible. Let us cite a few instances where these French clerical gentlemen committed themselves.

In 1719 Governor Philipps complains of Peres Vincent and Felix that they "distinguish themselves for most inveterate enemies to the British interest, and preside in the quality of Governors over Minas and Chignecto, two most considerable settlements in Nova Scotia. The people pay them a willing obedience and are grown so insolent as to say they will neither swear allegiance nor leave the country." Knowing how entirely these people were under the direction of their priests, it is obvious that they never would—never could—have "grown so insolent" without the priestly countenance.

Governor Mascarene says in 1740: "The missionaries seem not to think it sufficient that the people here who are His Majesty's subjects enjoy the free exercise of their religion without they themselves assume a power which the laws of Great Britain do not allow."

In the following year we find him gravely and at length remonstrating with M. Des Enclaves, parish priest of Annapolis, and one of the least troublesome of his class, for so closely commingling temporal matters with his

spiritual duties. He points out how, under their spiritual claims, "the missionaries have often usurped the power to make themselves the sovereign judges and arbitrators of all causes among the people." He supposes an example: "A parishioner complains to the priest that his neighbour owes him or detains such a thing from him, the priest examines the neighbour in the way of confession. The man denies his owing or detaining such a thing unjustly. The priest doth not stop where he should, but calls and examines witnesses, and then decides in a judicial manner and condemns the party to make restitution, and to oblige him thereunto refuses to administer the sacraments, by which, if the man is persuaded that it is within the priest's power to grant or withhold the pardon of his sins, he is in a woe-ful case and must rather submit to be deprived of his goods than to incur damnation, as he believes, by not receiving absolution from the priest. Consider, Monsieur," he continues, "how this tends to render all civil judicature useless, and how easy it will be for the missionaries to render themselves the only distributors of justice among people bred up in ignorance." It is notorious that this is exactly what they did practically make of themselves down to the very day of their expulsion from the country. In another place Mascarene charges the missionaries with endeavouring to "establish an *imperium in imperio*, which the laws of Great Britain will not suffer."

In 1736 the Indians in the vicinity of Cape Sable, having seized an English vessel and committed other depredations, Messrs. Chevereaux and De St. Poncey, two priests who happened then to be in Annapolis, were called before the Governor and Council, and were there directed to go down to Pobomcoup (Pubnico) along with Mr. Charles D'Entremont, of that place, and Lieut. Amherst, and to use their influence with the Indians in order to rescue from them, if possible, the sails and any other effects belonging to the vessel so seized. According to D'Entremont, "a priest was also much wanted at their village (Pubnico) to baptize and administer the sacrament." The priests answered in a most insolent and audacious manner; absolutely refused to go; ordered chairs to be brought that they might sit down; declared "with unbecoming air and unmannerly gesture, that they owed no orders to anybody here, and were subject only to the King of France; and laughed and, with a most haughty and insolent air, turned their backs upon the Governor and Council and stalked out of the room, rudely slamming the doors after them." It was decreed that they should be sent out of the Province.

Pere Charles Germain, of the Society of Jesus, was appointed missionary to the Indians on the river St. John. This was about 1745. For several years he acted as authorized agent of the Quebec Government, and as such carefully transmitted to the Governors of Canada intelligence of all the British movements in Nova Scotia. Despatches between him and those Governors were frequently arrested, and he was known to have assisted in various operations against the British. The Abbé Miniac, who had also come direct from Quebec, was known to have publicly drank the "Pretender's" health, and to have otherwise scandalously acted as a French partisan among British subjects. Numerous other special instances might be cited, but of these priestly French emissaries the Abbé Louis Joseph de Loutre far surpassed all others in the untiring malignity evinced by him towards the British, and the unscrupulous villainy with which he carried his diabolical schemes into effect. This man was missionary to the Micmac Indians of Nova Scotia. He was also for many years, and until he had to fly the country, the emissary and confidential correspondent of the Governors of Quebec. He was also made Vicar General of Acadie under the Bishop of Quebec, by means of which position he managed to obtain an almost unbounded influence over other members of his profession in Nova Scotia, making them his agents in reducing the French Acadians and Indians to the most abject submission. This De Loutre really rode the high horse with a vengeance. Having the full support of Vaudreuil and Galissoniere, Governors of Canada, he even assumed direction of the French-Canadian commanders at Beausejour, River St. John and elsewhere in Acadie, and carried on his machinations in utter disregard of his clerical superiors. As for the remonstrances of the British authorities, they were treated by him with contempt. In March, 1746, by means of his subservient agents, he intercepted the letters of the—then English—Governor of Louisbourg to Governor Mascarene, of Annapolis, which letters he sent to Quebec; in July following he assisted the officers of a French frigate, then on the coast of Nova Scotia, in the capture of several small vessels laden with supplies and provisions for the British forces; and we find him on two occasions—in 1744 and 1746—making urgent efforts to compass the seizure of Annapolis Royale. But we shall presently see more of this odd sample of a clerical *Chevalier*.

The handful of British subjects in Nova Scotia at the time of the Peace of Utrecht, in 1713, soon found themselves very much in the position of a man who has become possessed of an able-bodied tiger—elaborately bound, indeed, but only with most flimsy cords. Here were they possessed of a country inhabited by a people of foreign origin, who, as to comparative numbers, were in the proportion of more than six to their one. Under express treaty stipulations, these people were either to leave the country or take the Oath of Allegiance and become loyal British subjects. The mass of them refused to do either the one or the other, although a number of those residing within three miles of Annapolis had already—in 1710—set the example of taking the Oath. Those, indeed, who remained had, by their submission to Lieut.-Governor Hobby, and subsequently

"obliged themselves under their hands all to remove save two families"—whose names are not French—"both of which had lived in New England formerly." Not one of them removed. When, in 1715, Lieut.-Governor Caulfield called upon them to fulfil treaty obligations, they, as we have seen, refused either to take the Oath or take their departure. When, in 1717, a similar attempt was made by Lieut.-Governor Doucette, his demands were evaded, but the *habitants* declined to take the oath. In 1720 Governor Philipps issued a proclamation calling upon them to choose delegates who, upon their general behalf, might confer with him and his Council as to what they were disposed to. The French wrote in reply "refusing"—so it is stated in the Council minutes—"to send proper persons to act for them"; which letter the Governor-in-Council would not condescend to answer. On the other hand, the recreant *habitants*, on the 6th of May, 1720, by and through their priest, Rev. P. Justinian, wrote to M. St. Ovide de Brouillan, Governor of Isle Royale, at Louisbourg, professing the most loyal fidelity to the King of France, and begging for the advice and assistance of M. de St. Ovide. They tell him that the English Governor has demanded of them "to take the Oath of Allegiance or leave the country within four months, without being allowed to take away any part of their personal property, except two sheep per family." They quietly ignored the fact that they had already been allowed ten years in which to leave the country with all their personal property and the proceeds from their lands if they could sell them. In the meantime the people of Minas wrote to the Governor positively refusing to take the Oath, the only explicitly stated one of "several reasons" being that the so doing would expose them "to the fury of the savages." We shall afterwards find this "reason" frequently trumped up. In every such case it was as false as it was preposterous, it being notorious that the Indians of all Acadie were, as already stated, the subservient tools of the French. Already the British found themselves in extreme difficulty. Feeling their weakness, we find that, towards the close of 1720, Governor Philipps and his Council besought the British Government to furnish them with additional forces sufficient to keep the French and their Indian allies in order. Meantime Governor Philipps' allowance of four months had expired—twenty-four months had expired; yet not a Frenchman budged out of Nova Scotia. On the other hand, frequent seizures and depredations were being made upon British property—especially shipping. This was invariably, by the *habitants*, blamed to the Indians, whilst the latter, when the mischief was really brought home to them, always declared that they had been set on by the French. Governor Philipps went back to England, and a new man—Lieut.-Governor Armstrong—tried his hand at managing these troublesome French Acadians.

In 1725 the new Lieut.-Governor tried, in his turn, to induce the French to take the oath of allegiance, or leave the country. They were always allowed that option. The French evaded compliance and prevaricated for about a twelvemonth. They then, on being still pressed, refused the Oath, unless a clause was inserted whereby they would not be obliged to carry arms. This impudent project of assuming under oath an allegiance which was really no allegiance at all, reminds one of the ingenuity of "Bottom the weaver." As thus:—

"Bottom.—Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck; and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect: Ladies, or fair ladies, I would wish you, or I would request you, or I would entreat you, not to fear, not to tremble, my life for yours. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life. No, I am no such thing; I am a man as other men are: and there, indeed, let him name his name, and tell them plainly he is Snug the joiner."

The Governor condescended to explain. He told them that they had no need to fear being called upon to carry arms—that it was contrary to the laws of Great Britain that a Roman Catholic should serve in the army at all. The French continued obdurate. It is said that at length the demanded clause was written upon the margin of the French translation of the Oath; but no copy of this paper is to be found. It was probably destroyed as a useless document. However that may be, this Oath with the marginal note was only taken and subscribed by a part of the residents along the Annapolis River. In 1727 Lieut.-Governor Armstrong despatched Captain Bennett to Minas (Horton and Cornwallis) and Ensign Philips to Beaubassin (Cumberland) to administer probably the same Oath to the residents of those two large settlements. The settlers refused to take any oath except to "Notre Bon Roi de France." Near the close of the year one Ensign Wroth returned from a sort of roving commission among the French settlements, and produced an oath of his own concoction—having in it some sort of conditional clause, which he, without authority, had been administering to the *habitants*. He was accordingly called before the Council and severely reprimanded; and the concessions pretended to have been made by him were declared to be "unwarrantable and dishonourable to His Majesty's Government and authority, and consequently null and void."

About the close of 1729 General Philipps, Governor-in-Chief, returned to Nova Scotia. He immediately set about demanding that the French inhabitants should positively and without further tergiversation take the Oath of Allegiance. Whether the French were afraid of him, as of a man who would stand no more nonsense, or were actuated by more worthy motives, he ostensibly succeeded.