

WHAT CAUSED THE DEPORTATION OF THE ACADIANS?

It seems safe to observe that all historical analyses require documentary evidence to satisfy the critical spirit of the present age. In such analyses, the imaginative faculty is not permitted to enjoy the scope which was once accorded it, and the writer who overlooks this incurs grave responsibilities. An author, however, is not to be held to too severe account for missing evidence. He may use due diligence in seeking it, and yet miss valuable matter to which access is difficult, or unknown to him; nay, it happens, that one's very familiarity with a subject sometimes renders him oblivious to an important detail close at hand; hence one should be chary in ascribing lapses of this sort to wilful oversight.

Again, it seems safe to observe, that in estimating the moral contents of an act of the past, we should take into account the difference between the standards then and now employed, as well as the social conditions and political exigencies of the time.

These reflections have been prompted by a late severe arraignment of certain historical workers, one of whom is no less than the late Francis Parkman of happy memory, who in treating of the Acadians, is accused not only of wilfully misrepresenting and distorting facts, but of maliciously suppressing evidence in their favor, in order to strengthen the case of his English forebears.¹ Little did the author of "Evangeline" realize, when he penned that

Vide Acadia, New York, Home Book Company; Montreal, John Lovell & Son.