

an easy prey to colonial marauders. The environment was not favorable to the growth of an agricultural community or to the development of those traits which mark the successful tiller of the soil. Yet when by the Treaty of Utrecht the country passed to the British crown, the marshes of the Bay of Fundy had been transformed into orchards and gardens and cornfields, and were possessed by a people that enjoyed a measure of prosperity which Lincoln in his youth would have considered almost luxury.

True, Parkman relates that "French officials described their dwellings as wretched wooden boxes, without ornaments or conveniences, and scarcely supplied with the necessary furniture." The "French officials," however, turn out to have been two officers who were stationed at Quebec, and Mr. Richard was unable to find that they wrote with personal knowledge. But apart from this, what would be regarded as "wretched wooden boxes" by fastidious French "militaires" would even today be reckoned tolerably comfortable dwellings by many American husbandmen. Winslow, who superintended the deportation of the Acadians of the district of Mines, is a better authority than either of Parkman's "officials"; and this is his testimony: "I found it a fine country and full of inhabitants, a beautiful Church, abundance of the goods of this world, and provisions of all kinds in great plenty." Even Parkman does not charge them with lacking industry until they had experienced a large measure of what he was pleased to term "the lenity and sweet of English rule." That, in spite of interminable discouragements and annoyances, they continued frugal and persevered in labor is evident by Cornwallis, who

thus addressed them not long before the dire event that made outcasts of those honest toilers: "Your lands produce grain and nourish cattle sufficient for the whole colony. We are well aware of your temperance, and that you are not addicted to any vice or debauchery." And the sturdy Anglo-Americans who possessed themselves of the lands and improvements of the exiles petitioned, in 1765, to be allowed to avail themselves of the services of the few Acadian peasants who drifted about the scene of their loves and their labors, confessing that without "their assistance" they could not plow or sow or maintain the dikes that kept back the ocean.

There can be little doubt that writers who make Acadia synonymous with Arcadia go beyond the strict bounds of genuine history; but he who indulges in unwarranted censure of a people sins more grievously against historic truth than does he who in bestowing deserved praise breaks into idealizing. It is true that the Acadians were a simple, and, speaking generally, an ignorant or rather an illiterate people. Simplicity can scarcely be considered an offence; and in their illiteracy they were not singular in their day, though a less prejudiced writer than Parkman would have found in their peculiar situation an excuse for their lagging behind similar classes in more favored countries. The descendants of forty-seven men who hewed down the forest and drove back the tide, making for themselves a home in the wilderness, would not in the nature of things feel for many decades the spur which urges to that sort of progress which the New England historian was shocked to find wanting in Acadia. Mr. Richard has avoided extremes; but the