

The Early Acadians of Prince Edward Island

(Lecture, delivered before the S. D. U. Academia
Society by Prof. J. H. Blanchard.)

LONG before any European set foot upon its soil, Prince Edward Island was known to the Micmac Indians as Abegweit, a word meaning, "a something lovely resting upon the wave." The exact date of its discovery by Europeans is wrapped up in the mists of the dim and cloudy past and perhaps will never be known. There is a very general belief, however, which no doubt arises from the account given in many of our school text books on Canadian History, that Prince Edward Island was first sighted by John Cabot, in 1497, who named it St. John's Island, in honor of the day, June 24th, St. John the Baptist's day.

The knowledge of the discovery and the naming of an island of St. John by Cabot rests solely upon the Latin and Spanish inscriptions on the Sebastian Cabot map of 1544. The translation is as follows: "This country was discovered by John Cabot a Venetian, and Sebastian Cabot his son, in the year of our Lord, Jesus Christ MCCCCXCIV., on the 24th day of June, in the morning, which country they called "primum visam," and a large island adjacent to it they named the Island of St. John, because they discovered it on that day."

In the older maps, this "terra primum visa" of Cabot is set down as being an Island on the coast of Labrador; but if the map of 1544 be authentic, the first land seen was the North East extremity of Cape Breton, and the large island adjacent, Scatari. For many years after this, Scatari was known to sailors as St. John's Island. John Cabot nowhere refers to

this island or to St. John the Baptist's day ; and nothing can be found in the pages of the great historian Hackluyt, which would indicate any knowledge of the existence of what we now call Prince Edward Island.

It may safely be said that the Cabots did not discover Prince Edward Island. As authority for this statement we can quote the writings of Dr. S. E. Dawson, Dr. W. F. Ganong, Sir Joseph Pope, Dr. Caven, Mr. J. P. Baxter, Mr. A. B. Warburton, and others. All these writers agree in giving Jacques Cartier, the bold and intrepid navigator of St. Malo, the honor of first landing on our Island. Dr. Ganong, however, has proved that it was not known by the name St. John until after the year 1600.

There are no less than five versions of the first voyage of Cartier. All five accounts substantially agree, but the manuscript discovered in 1867 in the Bibliotheque Imperiale, Paris, is undoubtedly Cartier's own account of the voyage. The part which bears on the point in question reads as follows : "And the next day, the wind came to the South, a quarter South West, and we ran until Tuesday, the last day of the month, at sunrise, without having sight of any land, save that in the evening, at sunsetting, we saw land appearing like two islands which lay to the West, South-West about nine or ten leagues. And this day we made it to the West, until the next day, at sunrise, about forty leagues ; and making way we had knowledge of the land, which had appeared to us like islands, that it was the mainland, which bore South South-West, and North North-West, as far as a very fair headland named Cape Orleans. All this is low level land, the fairest that it may be possible to see, and full of goodly trees and meadows ; but in it we

could not find a harbour, because it is a low land and a sunken country, and wholly ranged with sands. We were then in several places with our boats, and among others, within a fair stream of little depth, where we saw boats of savages crossing the said stream, which was therefore named River of Boats (Kildare River). And we went to the North East, until next day at sunrise, at which time came fogs and tempest, and we struck sails, until about 10 o'clock, when it cleared up and we had sight of the said Cape Orleans (Kildare Cape) and of another which lay from it about seven leagues to the North, which we named Wild Man's Cape, (Le Cape des Sauvages, North Cape), to the North-East of which there is a shoal and a bank of very dangerous stones. We landed there this day in four places, to see the trees, which are excellently fair and of excellent odor, and found that they were cedars, yews, pines, white elms, ash, willows, and many others to us unknown, all trees without fruits. The lands where there are no woods are very fair and all so full of gooseberries, white and red strawberries, and raspberries that they seem to have been cultivated there. This land is of the best temperature that it may be possible to see, and of great warmth, and there are many turtle doves, wood pigeons and other birds; there is no lack but of harbours." (Hackluyt).

The first mention of the name Isle of St. John, as unquestionably applied to Prince Edward Island, is attributed to Champlain. He knew it by 1603, but by hearsay only.

From the time of Cartier down to the year 1653, very little is heard of the Isle of St. John. In that year, Nicolas Denys, an enterprising and adventurous trader, obtained from the famous Compagnie de la

Nouvelle France, a grant of the lands and islands situated on the Gulf of St. Lawrence. In the work describing these vast domains, dedicated to Louis XIV, Denys calls himself Lieutenant-Governor for the king and proprietor of all these lands and islands. The Isle of St. John being comprised in these domains he gives an interesting description of it. Denys' occupation of the Isle St. John, produced no definite results. He seems to have confined his operations to but a few harbours, and not to have attempted any settlement, except such as were necessary for the carrying on of his fisheries.

In 1663, after the Compagnie de la Nouvelle France had lost its charter, St. John's Island was granted to Sieur Francois Doublet, a naval captain, but nothing of importance resulted from this grant.

Mr. Stewart, in his "Account of Prince Edward Island," published in 1806, says that from all the information he could obtain, it would appear that the French did not make any permanent settlement with a view to the cultivation of the soil until after the treaty of Utrecht, (1713). Lieutenant Governor Caulfield of Nova Scotia, writing from Annapolis Royal in 1716, to the Board and Trade and Plantations, says: "The Island of St. John, which the French of this colony seemed to like, in case they were obliged to quit us, is entirely abandoned by those inhabitants who had gone out of this Government."

But this abandoned condition was not long to continue. In August 1719, Letters Patent were issued granting St. John's Island to a Company headed by Count de St. Pierre, first equerry to the Duchess of Orleans. The purpose of this grant was to enable

the company to establish a cod fishery, settle the island, cultivate the soil and get out lumber.

Rev. Dr. J. C. MacMillan in his splendid book, "The Early History of the Catholic Church in Prince Edward Island," remarks: "With this concession to Count St. Pierre the history of St. John's Island properly begins. Heretofore almost entirely neglected, it now became the point towards which covered two streams of emigrants, the one from France, the other from Acadia or Nova Scotia."

Writing in the Prince Edward Island Magazine, May 1899, Dr. Caven describes the coming of the first emigrants sent out by Count St. Pierre in the following eloquent lines: "On the 15th day of April 1720, three ships carrying 300 emigrants and the more necessary requirements for their settlement on an unpeopled island, lay in the harbour of Rochefort ready for sea,—their destination in the first instance being Louisburg. A naval lieutenant, Daniel Gotteville de Bellisle was appointed to command the expedition and to act on its arrival there as governor of the new colony. After a long voyage, on the 23rd of August the ships which carried the governor arrived at Louisburg. Here it was learned that the other ships had already proceeded on their way to the Island of St. John.

After the ships from Louisburg gained the waters of the Strait, the emigrants sailed in full view of the land they had adopted as their country. From the decks, they no doubt scrutinized the features of the shore along which they sailed, and compared the landscape of their native Poitou, Brittany, or Normandy with the lowly red shores washed by foamy breakers, and forest stretching inland, unbroken save by an estuary or some far-reaching bay. Weathering

Cape Bear and Point Prim the ships stood up the Ance of Port Lajoie.

When Gotteville's ship sailed into the Harbour of Port Lajoie, the landing of the emigrants and stores was well in progress. But behind the toil of landing, there lay another and greater toil—that of providing shelter for the emigrants against the severities of an approaching winter, and tier on tier up the declivity of Port Lajoie, still rose the timber which was to serve in building those shelters. It would be interesting to know all the details connected with the establishment of this community at the entrance of our harbour; if it had settled down to anything like comfort when the cold gusts stripped the forest and the cry of the wild geese was heard in the murky November sky; how it fared with them further on, when the currents of the three great rivers and the ebb and flow of the tides were hidden below a solid pavement of ice, and when from the strong North-East came the drifted storm, heaping up glittering hills of snow, and fiercely invading every crevice of the hastily built log house. To all or nearly all the colonists, such experiences would be new, but how they were borne, no one has deemed worth while to leave us a record.

As soon as the material had been safely landed several log houses were built, a breastwork was thrown up and eight pieces of cannon were set up with 30 soldiers to serve them and a tall black cross was erected upon ground consecrated to the dead. A church was built, but its site can no longer be identified. It was dedicated to St. John the Evangelist, and Pere Breslay of the order of the Sulpicians its first cure, was also the first priest to set foot in Prince Edward Island. He came in April 1721.

He was joined soon after by the Abbe Metivier. Both priests remained till the spring of 1723, when they were succeeded by the Franciscan fathers, Barbet and Dulongjon. It may be of interest to note that for the next thirty-five years 1723-58, no less than twenty-three French missionaries labored among the Micmacs and Acadians of Prince Edward Island.

Denys de la Ronde, the pilot who had accompanied Gotteville from Louisburg, writing from Port Lajoie in 1721 speaks in the following terms of the Isle of St. John: "Port Lajoie is one of the most beautiful harbors that the eye could behold. He mentions having visited the North Shore and entered the harbors of St. Peter's, Savage Harbour, Tracadie, Rassicot (Rustico), Malpeque and Cascumpeque. He reports that a ship of 100 tons was built to sail for Europe with a cargo of codfish, one of 25 tons for the seal fisheries around the Magdalen Islands, and, a third of 65 tons to trade with the West Indies. At Port Lajoie sixteen families from France and four from Acadia had settled, while the remainder of the emigrants were to be found at Three Rivers (Georgetown), St. Peter's and Tracadie.

In the meantime the affairs of the Company of Count St. Pierre were getting into bad shape. Few settlers had been brought out, and these had been sadly neglected. In November 1724, owing to the lack of assistance from the Company, a great many of the inhabitants went to Isle Royale (Cape Breton Island.) This really put an end to St. Pierre's venture. Trouble also arose concerning the interpretation of his fishing privileges in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. In October 1725, the Council of State, in Paris, revoked the Letters Patent given to Count St. Pierre, and thus the first episode in

the history of the colonization of the Island of St John came to an end.

Only one settlement remained intact. This had been established by De Roma at Brudenelle Point, near the present site of Georgetown. De Roma's diary and accounts of his doings are still extant. They contain much valuable information about this settlement, which would make very interesting reading if space permitted its inclusion. It is sufficient to say that DeRoma remained and worked on diligently until the week before Louisburg fell into the hands of the Americans under Pepperell in 1745. A hostile cruiser appeared. No resistance was made. De Roma together with his family and servants escaped to the woods. The booty was carried off by the invaders and all the buildings were given up to the flames. After much hardship De Roma made his way through the forest to St. Peter's and afterwards reached Quebec.

In the year 1726, St. Ovide de Brouillon, governor of Louisburg, sent M. De Pensens, with twenty-five men to occupy the fort at Port Lajoie. With him came a number of emigrants.

The year 1728, the year of the first official census of the Isle of St John, also witnessed a large immigration. This census, carefully taken, showed a population of 336 persons, located in seven settlements. Fourteen families resided at Port La Joie; eighteen at St. Peter's three; at East Point; fifteen at Savage Harbour; four at Tracadie; and three at Malpepue. Of these 2 had come in 1719, 15 in 1720; 5 in 1721; 5 in 1722; 3 in 1723; 3 in 1724; 1 in 1725, 1 in 1726, and 25 in 1728. By 1731, there were 84 families comprising 347 persons. The census of 1735

shows an increase of 24 families, making a total of 543 souls distributed as follows:

At St. Peter's	294
Tracadie,	39
Port Lajoie	114
St. Peter's Lake	35
Malpeque	31
East Point	18
Three Rivers (Georgetown)	10

Until the year 1744, the same gradual increase of population continued and new settlements were formed at Bedeque, Point Prim, Fortune Bay, Orwell, and along the banks of the Hillsborough, East and West rivers.

In order clearly to understand the history of the Isle of St. John during the next few years, it is necessary to keep in mind that since the treaty of Utrecht in 1713, the English held the province of Acadia (The present province of Nova Scotia, with the exception of Cape Breton Island.) We must also remember that the Acadians were still at Port Royal, Minas and around the Bay of Fundy shores, and continued to live there until their sad expulsion in 1755.

In 1744, war was declared between England and France. The hatred of France which had always rankled in the breasts of the New Englanders now found a vent of escape. A fleet under Captain Pepperell was sent against the great stronghold of Louisburg. This fleet reinforced by Captain Warren and 5 British ships of war arrived before the fortress in May, 1745. Before the end of June the garrison had capitulated and the flag of England floated from the battlements of the conquered city.

Shortly before the capitulation Pepperell had despatched a company of 400 men to St. John's Island to destroy all the property and carry off the inhabitants. A party landed at Three Rivers, where, as has already been stated, all the buildings of De Roma were given up to the flames. While this was going on at Three Rivers, another company of troops had landed at Port Lajoie whose only protection was a garrison of 15 men. Here the same destruction and devastation were carried on. The fort was speedily demolished and the village given over to the flames. The inhabitants fled in terror to the interior of the country, pursued by the English. The pursuit, however, did not long continue. Duvivier, the French commander, having succeeded to effecting a union with a few Micmacs, suddenly attacked the pursuers and drove them back to their ships. In the pursuit the English had 28 men killed or taken prisoners.

During the remainder of this war, St. John's Island was left in comparative quiet. The reason for this is to be found in the state of the garrison at Louisburg. A contagious disease broke out among the troops and according to Shirley, an eye witness, 900 were buried in the cemetery adjoining the fort.

On account of this war, the gradual increase of population which had been constant prior to 1744, now practically ceased through the lack of immigration; whilst the 700 or 800 inhabitants on the island at that time, were greatly diminished in numbers, by the calls to the garrison of Louisburg and the destructive invasion of 1745 in which the settlements of Three Rivers and Port Lajoie particularly had suffered.

By the treaty of Aix la Chapelle, signed in 1748, Cape Breton Island and St. John's Island were returned to France while England was confirmed in the posses-

ion of Acadia. France now began to understand that in order to keep her remaining American possessions, much greater vigilance must be exercised. Accordingly, Louisburg was much strengthened; St. John's Island also received a certain measure of attention. A new governor, Denis de Bonaventure with several new colonists arrived at Port Lajoie in 1749. The fort was speedily rebuilt, the fortifications were repaired and a garrison was stationed over it as of old. The hum of industry and activity soon replaced the monotony which had succeeded the invasion of 1745.

And now we come to an event which marks a turning point in the history of the early Acadian settlers of these Maritime Provinces. In 1749, Halifax was founded by Lord Cornwallis, Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia. Up to that time, the Acadians of the peninsula had been treated with a certain measure of kindness. The small garrison at Port Royal could ill afford to molest a people now numbering thousands. But no sooner was Halifax founded and a strong force of soldiers posted in the province, than the mask of kindness was removed and a policy of deceit and treachery towards the Acadian people for which it would be hard to find a parallel in modern history, was entered upon. An oath of allegiance which did violence to their inmost feelings was demanded of them, and they had to purchase their rights of citizenship at the price of sentiments founded in flesh and blood.

The Archives of the time prove conclusively that, at one time, they were threatened with immediate deportation, at another, they were told that their property would be confiscated to the crown should they dare try to leave the British possessions. Their con-

dition was indeed pitiable. Hence we find them evading the vigilance of Cornwallis who kept ships patrolling the straits, and secretly flocking to St. John's Island. For example, the parish of Cobequid in Nova Scotia which contained 1200 people in 1749, had only 300 in 1754. Three hundred left Port Royal and 500 Pigiguit in the same time. By this influx of settlers the population of St. John's Island had been very considerably increased during the years immediately following 1749.

In the year 1752, a very complete description of the condition of St John's Island was recorded by the French engineer, Colonel Franquet who had been sent out by the French Government to inspect their fortifications in New France and also to devise and propose plans for the construction of new ones. Colonel Franquet's account is the most important historical document on the affairs of the Island of St. John under French rule.

Leaving Louisburg on July 27, 1752, Franquet arrived at Port Lajoie on the 2nd of August. The fort which did not deserve the name, was situated to the left on entering the harbour. It consisted of wooden constructions only, hastily put up by Governor Bonaventure in 1749. Franquet has left us a complete plan of the buildings as they stood on his arrival. On the 9th of August he went up the East River in a row boat and crossed over to St. Peter's Bay. He describes the settlements on both sides of the river minutely. He states that he never saw finer crops in the best parts of France. A very full description of the St. Peter's district is also given. He gives the number of inhabitants at St. Peter's Harbour as 102; St. Peter's Lake, 22; at Savage Harbour, 34; at Tracadie 48, a total of 206. He then proceeded

methodically up the various rivers and creeks which were then almost the only highways. He made the circuit around Hillsborough and Orwell Bays, visiting in turn Anse au Matelot, Grande Ascension, Pointe au Bouleau, Anse de la Boullotiere, Point Prime and Pointe Pinnet. There were no other names to record until he reached Havre de la Fortune and Pointe de L'Est. Upon the North side he visited St. Peter's Savage Harbour, Tracadie, Etang des Berges and Macpec. Apparently there were no settlements farther west, so he crossed to the South side and enumerated in turn the population of Bedec, La Traverse, Riviere de Blonds, des Crapauds, Anse du Nord Ouest and Anse au Sanglier. This record shows that there were 2014 settlers on the Island, forming a poor but contented community. Only one person owned more than one horse; cows were scarce but oxen were a common possession. The families were large and few adults were unmarried. None were rich, many were poor and some were very poor. Nearly all the adults were natives of Acadia.

Another traveller Thomas Pichon who visited St John's Island at the same time has left a long account of his travels and observations, but it is rather barren of information.

Dr. J. C. McMillan writes of the Acadians of this "period" as follows: "A stranger visiting St. John's Island, in those days, might well fancy himself transported to France, or to some quiet village of Acadia, so faithfully were the peaceful rural scenes of these reproduced in the young colony. Here the people led the same pious lives which evoked the admiration of the poet and called forth from his pen the following tribute :

Thus dwelt together in love these simple Acadian
peasants.
Dwelt in the love of God and man. Alike were they
free from
Fear, that reigns with the tyrant, and envy, the vice
of republics;
Neither locks had they to their doors, nor bars to
their windows;
But their dwellings were open as day, and the hearts
of the owner,
There the richest was poor, and the poorest lived in
abundance.

The population of the colony was steadily increasing. Immigrants were continually arriving from Nova Scotia, where the tyranny of the English governor rendered the lives of the French inhabitants almost unbearable. In 1753 a census places the population at 2663 souls. Most of them were settled near the centre and not far from Port Lajoie. In detail this census was as follows: Pinette, 84; Point Prime, 193; La Grande Anse (Orwell Bay), 108; Le Marais, 127; Ruisseau a Lafrance, 27; Port Lajoie, 71; Anse du Nord Ouest, 31; Riviere du Nord, 48; Riviere du Nord Est, 728; St. Peter's Harbour, 197; Dunes a l'Est du Havre St. Pierre, 73; St. Peter's Lake, 55; Savage Harbour, 87; Tracadie, 78; Etang des Berges, 20; Malpec, 259; Bedec, 101; Rivere de la Traverse, 45; Riviere des Blonds, 60; Riviere au Crapaud, 10; Etang du Cap, 4; Riviere de la Fortune, 67; total,—2663.

This census was the last taken before the expulsion. The population must have much increased during the next few years, as emigrants were constantly arriving from Nova Scotia. These came without

food and with only scanty clothing, for their departure was often so hurriedly taken that they could not make provision for the journey.

Father Girard, the cure at Point Prime, writing on October 24, 1753, draws a gloomy picture of the poverty of the new comers. He writes; "Our refugees in general keep up good courage and hope to be able to support themselves by their labour; but the want of clothing which is almost general is a great drawback and will prevent many from working during the winter. They have no implements to work with, nor sufficient clothing to protect themselves by day or night. Many of the children are so scantily clad that when I enter the houses, they flee for very shame. All are not reduced to this extremity, but almost all are in need.

The year 1755 brought still more troubles on account of the expulsion of their friends from Nova Scotia. Dr. J. C. MacMillan writes as follows of this sad tragedy: "By this barbarous measure, one of the foulest blots on the pages of Canadian history, thousands of innocent men women and children were torn from the homes which their industry had reared, driven from the country they had learned to love and forced to seek refuge among strangers in a foreign land. Ships were stationed at the seaboard into which the unfortunate people were driven by their cruel masters to be carried into exile. Amid the disorder of embarkation, however, a number escaped, and hid themselves in the woods. Of these some sought the protection of friendly Indian tribes, some made their way to Miramichi and Canada, others to Louisburg; while many crossed the strait and came to St. John's Island. These unfortunate exiles arrived in the greatest destitution. Homeless, penniless, without food

and with scanty clothing, they came seeking a roof to shelter them, a crust to dispel their hunger, a kind word to cheer and comfort them. Their countrymen of St. John's Island received them with every mark of kindness and affection. They threw open to them the doors of their humble cottages, shared with them their own scanty allowances of food, placed at their disposal remnants taken from their depleted wardrobes and did everything that charity could suggest and sacrifice could accomplish in order to make up the loss sustained in their expulsion. But the chalice of Acadian suffering was not yet emptied to the dregs. Tyranny had not yet exhausted all its energies, and soon the refugees from Nova Scotia and their charitable friends in St. John's Island were involved in one common ruin."

During the autumn of 1755 and the spring of 1756, no less than 1400 exiles crossed the strait into St. John's Island. Fourteen hundred people—men, women, and children of every age, some unable to walk, carried on litters. Many families had been broken up, children were separated from their parents, women from their husbands. All these people, filled with nameless sorrows wandered from house to house looking for a refuge. Happy indeed was the family that found a lodging in some old barn or shed, for all houses were filled by the first arrivals.

But the worst was yet to come. In the spring of 1758, forty-two warships with 12000 men, in command of Admiral Boscawen, appeared before Louisburg. It is easier to imagine than describe the feelings of the Acadians of St. John's Island on hearing this news. Their anxiety was at its height, when Father Maillard, the celebrated missionary to the Micmacs of Acadia, arrived at Port Lajoie and

brought the terrible news that Louisburg had fallen. The population of the Island of St. John practically all Acadian, lately augmented, as we have seen, by the large influx of refugees after the expulsion of 1755, no doubt foresaw what was in store for them; but by a strange fatality refused to be convinced,—not being able to make up their minds that they would be a second time driven out from the homes which they had reared and where they hoped soon to enjoy comfort and prosperity. To their gentle minds it seemed impossible that their enemies would have the heart to repeat the terrible scenes of Acadia.

Alas, the unfortunate islanders were soon to be undeceived. Almost immediately after the capture of Louisburg, Admiral Boscawen despatched Lord Rollo with a part of the fleet to the Gulf, with orders to burn and destroy every establishment of the French in these regions. On his arrival at Port Lajoie, Lord Rollo notified governor Villejoin of the order he had received. All resistance was of course useless; Villejoin's only course was to submit. Imagine the consternation, the black despair of the unfortunate inhabitants. Even yet, they could not believe that the time had come when they would have to leave their homes and the results of their hard labors behind them. The leading inhabitants met and drew up a petition to Lord Rollo, asking him to accept their submission and to permit them to remain. Lord Rollo's orders did not permit this, but he agreed to allow the abbe Cassiet, cure of St. Louis du Nord Est, and the abbe Biscaret, cure of St. Pierre du Nord, to carry the petition to Louisburg. But it was all of no avail, General Amherst and Admiral Boscawen, inspired no doubt by the inhuman governor Laurence, who was then at Louisburg, were

obdurate. Neither prayers nor entreaties had any effect. The odious edict must be carried out to the letter. Father MacMillan writes on this point: "The Acadians of St John's Island were treated as those of Nova Scotia. Deprived of their homes, they were driven to the seaside, and hurriedly crowded aboard ships to be conveyed from the country. The prows are turned to the deep. A cheerless voyage amid the storms and cold of autumn confronts them. They steer their frail crafts for France, that beautiful motherland whose traditions they had learned at their firesides, but whose sunny shores many of them were destined never to see. Standing on the decks, as the receding island was gradually disappearing on the horizon, they could descry the enemy's work of destruction. Lurid flames shot up high into the air from many a erstwhile happy homestead, and thick dark clouds of smoke, hovering over the land, told how complete was the ruin. The victors destroyed everything that fell into their hands. Even the churches shared the common fate. They were burned to the ground, and only smouldering ruins were left to mark the place where they had stood."

L'Abbe H. R. Gasgrain, in "Une Second Acadie," has a splendid page picturing some of the scenes which must have been often repeated, during the few weeks between the day when all hope of remaining was abandoned and the final departure. The following is a very imperfect translation which does not begin to do justice to the eloquent lines of the distinguished historian: "These few weeks must have been marked by incidents of a profound interest, but which will doubtless never be known, for the victims and the authors of the terrible tragedy are alike silent on this point. But it suffices to reflect

on the lamentable fate which these unfortunate people had staring them in the face, to realize how terrible must have been their desolation. Let us for a moment picture to ourselves the heartrending scenes which must have been enacted in each household at the moment of departure, the preparations for the dreadful journey, the standing crops left behind, the cattle abandoned in the fields; but especially, let us penetrate into their humble churches, the last Sundays spent there. The adieux of the priests to their parishioners, the last masses heard in the midst of sobs and tears, the final exhortations on leaving the churches, nevermore to return. And finally the day of departure, let us try to imagine the sombre despair of the men, the tears and cries of the women and children leaving their loved homes, where they had long lived in peace and where they hoped to die. Let us then follow them along the roads of their beloved isle; some from Malpeque, from St. Peter's, from St. Louis, from Point Prim, from Bedeque—all bound for Port Lajoie, where the sad sea voyage was to begin. If we can picture a few of these things to our minds, perhaps we shall have a slight idea of what these poor souls suffered."

Dr. Andrew McPhail has this to say concerning the expulsion of the Acadians from St. John's Island:

"Whatever causes existed in Nova Scotia for the deportation of the Acadians, in St. John's Isle there were none associated with the conduct of the inhabitants. They were an inoffensive people. They had molested no one, either by themselves or in conjunction with the Indians; and the Indians also had kept their hands free from blood."

A close scrutiny of the records fails to disclose complete information as to the destination and the

number of the inhabitants removed. The most reliable information would seem to indicate that the population of the Island of St. John at the time of the expulsion was about 6000, although some think it was much higher. In 1764, six years after the expulsion, Captain Holland, who made a complete survey of the island, found only 30 Acadian families. We also know that the census of 1798, shows a population of 720 families, of whom only 80 families were Acadian. This was 40 years after the expulsion; so it must have been very thorough. Documents in the archives of Marine and Colonies, at Paris, show that about 3000 Acadians from all parts of North America reached France from 1755 to 1759. A great many were scattered among the New England States and as far South as Virginia. How many perished in the woods, how many found watery graves, or died of starvation and disease will never be known. But of this we are sure: A few weeks after the capture of Louisburg, of the five fine parishes of Port Lajoie, Point Prime, St. Louis, St. Peters, and Malpeque, each provided with church and parochial house, and surrounded by villages, with large cultivated farms, with 10,000 head of cattle, horses, and sheep, there remained absolutely nothing but ashes. St. John's Island was once more a solitude as in the days of Champlain and Denys.

After some years, a few of the exiles came back. Later some of their comrades joined them. Sometimes groups of them would be seen wandering over the sites of their former homes and churches. With what heartburnings must they have viewed these mournful solitudes which they had once seen so animated! What had become of their old neighbors and friends? Alas, gone forever; many dead from

sorrow, others the victims of unknown disasters. The few survivors had been

“Scattered like dust and leaves when the mighty
blasts of October
Seize them, and whirl them aloft, and sprinkle them
far o'er the ocean.

The “few survivors” have become the ancestors of the numerous Acadian inhabitants of Prince Edward Island. Today, they number over 13000, settled in several flourishing parishes, the most important of which are : Tignish, Palmer Road, Bloomfield, Egmont Bay, Mount Carmel, Miscouche and Rustico.



His life was gentle, and the elements
So mix'd in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, This was a man !
—Shakespeare.

Fit for the mountains and the barb'rous caves,
Where manners ne'er were preach'd.
—Shakespeare.

The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils.
—Shakespeare.

All Nature is but art unknown to thee ;
All chance direction which thou canst not see.
—Pope.