

doubled and tripled the field of the discoveries which they found before them. The Ohio was ascended to its source; the Missouri delivered up its secrets; Hudson's Bay became a Canadian lake. All that between 1675 and 1700. Famous epoch! of which we cannot sufficiently admire the *elan*.

Soon it became a question yet again of setting back the bounds of the known world. A blank still remained upon the American map, like that which there was in Central Africa 20 years ago. From Lake Superior to the western sea all was yet mysterious; it was not even known how far the land stretched over there. Then came a man who, trained to such adventures, was destined to carry the French name to the foot of the Rocky Mountains—Varenes de la Verendrye. Not content with discovery only, he was one who knew how to found and to give stability to his conquest. From the commencement he employed commerce, that formidable wedge before which new continents open up for the free passage of civilized man. Year after year, from 1731 to 1743, La Verendrye† went on pressing forward into the west, while protecting his rear by the forts and factories with which he staked out his route. His works, continued by his sons, remained standing long after the conquest. To meet, in these territories, the advance-guard of the Anglo-Saxon race, we must go to the year 1780, and even later. At that time our people (French-Canadian *coureurs de bois* and half-breed settlers) already counted numerous families, and held twenty important posts, where a great trade in furs was carried on.

Thus, two distinct phases mark the history of geographical knowledge in Canada. In the first, it is Jacques Cartier, Champlain—say rather France—who seeks and who finds; in the second, the Canadians, from their little colony, furnish the material for the most marvelous of continental discoveries.

Look at the New England settlers, who, surpassing us many times in population, did not dream of extending their possessions. With half their resources, we should have gone, at one bound, to Mexico and California.

Turn to Australia and you find a similar backwardness. The colonists stuck to the coast. The continent's interior is in its wild state. And what is to be said of Africa, harboring upon her borders groups of pioneers who, with all their strength, dare not trust themselves out of sight of their village clocks? Suppose upon these continents a colony of Canadians—forthwith, without awaiting a mother country's aid, without weighing the chances of the struggle, you will see

explorers plunging into the depths of the inmost regions, and opening up communication with them. Yes, I repeat it, never has work been done to compare with that of our "*voyageurs*."

And see this miracle. In a time when the greatest minds of Europe but groped for a way of pushing out the limbs of a science of geography, our people had created that science. Yes, had created it entire; and more than that, they brought it into active and practical operation.

Is it not true that everywhere in Europe, in the colonies, the most extended notion of geography two centuries ago was about limited to the knowledge of the surrounding country of one's native town or hamlet? What think you, then of a people who, starting from that time, stretched their influence over some hundreds of leagues of country, and who aimed to do still more? Yet that is what Canadians did. And mark well, that not only was it the administrators, the higher classes, the savants, who possessed this faculty, this passion for discovery,—it was each family and every man. What was the surprise of British officers and functionaries, when they wished to become acquainted with the new regions, to perceive that the humblest *voyageur* of their escort possessed more accurate knowledge than the boasted science of Europe or America. Never could they advance far enough to pass the limit of Canadian habitations. A little more and our *voyageurs* would have penetrated China!

We are, then, a race eminently gifted for geographical studies. They are our very instincts. To-day we have but to follow them as naturally as of yore.

We now turn to the modern state of affairs. It is very different from that of which we have been speaking. The domain of study has greatly changed in a hundred years. It has become hardly recognizable. New wants seem to have surged over humanity: at any rate people no longer live as they lived then.

Steam, the telegraph, gold mines, have upset the ancient order of things. With greater distances and instantaneous communication, with the abundance of manufactures, with a general desire to overrun the globe and to possess it, the world of other days exists no longer.

As, then, we must march with the age, our enquiring eyes turn towards the yet unexplored regions of our planet—and thus was geographical science first conceived—a science which, rooted truly in the past, dates, more strictly speaking, from twenty, or perhaps fifteen years ago.

We perceive that, to rule in unknown lands, we must first discover what they are, and that to discover them the old means hardly sufficed. Thus, we have no more such frontiersmen to slowly com-

† M. Sube-Eau written the lives Nicolet, Chouard, and La Verendrye C. C.