

We have sent out successive waves of colonisation, and in this respect the Victorian does not differ from the ages that have preceded it since that time, but only surpasses them.

In this process of expansion I seem to distinguish four great waves. Under James I. there were founded Virginia and New England; under Charles II. New York, the Carolinas, and Pennsylvania were added. The third wave marks the period of the eighteenth century to which I have called your attention; this time, however, there is less colonisation than conquest. The founding of Georgia is insignificant beside the conquest of Canada and Florida, and the wonderful commencement of the conquest of India. The last and greatest wave belongs to the Victorian age, which has witnessed the full settlement of Australia and New Zealand; the growth of Canada into a Dominion spanning the American Continent; the great extension of our South African settlements, and the completion of the conquest of India.

The period between 1737 and 1787 was divided between George II. and George III. For this and other reasons it was seldom contemplated as a whole, and though its three great events may be more or less remembered, the connection between them is missed, and we do not see that taken altogether they form one prodigious event, which may be regarded as making the first chapter in the history of the English world State. The three events I mean are (1) that confused war, partly with Spain, partly with France, which began off the Spanish Main in 1739 and ended at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1743; (2) that war of 1756, the famous war of Chatham and Wolfe; (3) the disastrous American war, which closed in 1783 with the surrender of the American Colonies. These wars we remember; we have our feeling about each. The first seems to us senseless, if not shameful, and we accept Burke's judgment who tells us that it ought never to have been undertaken at all. The war of Chatham we remember with pride; the memory of the American war is humiliating. Why does war in this period take the place of education? It is, in one word, because we had to struggle at this era against the alliance of France and Spain, against the united House of Bourbon. Spain was the old mistress of the New World, the colonial power in possession. France was the rising aspirant to colonial greatness, aiming to join in one strategic line the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi, and at the same time intriguing for empire in the native courts of Hindostan.

Such is the slightest outline is the history of Greater Britain in the Georgian era. This is what happened in the half century between 1737 and 1787. It is no very wonderful half century that is reviewed. Science and invention have made progress, but modest progress; literature has been on the whole languid; art has been a little more vigorous, and we have now for the first time great painters. At home there has been at least in the main, tranquillity; our institutions have proved themselves stable. But in one aspect the period is striking and wonderful. Abroad and beyond the limits of Europe we have plunged into strange adventures and undergone strange vicissitudes beyond all earlier example; we have assumed quite a different position. Since Queen Anne there has been a Great Britain, but in this period there has sprung up a Greater Britain still. In contrast with this Georgian era comes the Victorian age, so called because two-thirds of it have fallen within the reign of the Queen. Its features are also most clearly marked. What now has become of that great enemy, that united House of Bourbon, which, in the eighteenth century, altered for the worse the whole character of our colonial expansion? The House of Bourbon itself is not gone. It reigns still in Spain; it reigned in France till 1848, the eleventh year of the Queen. But all rivalry of France and Spain in the New World is over. It was brought to an end by the great war. On the one side the maritime preponderance of England was greatly increased, on the other France lost her footing in North America when she abandoned Louisiana, lost her footing also in India, and was deprived of Mauritius. Spain too in the revolutions of the great war lost her hold upon her great colonies which broke away from her, and somewhat later established their independence. Holland also has retired from the competition. And thus it has become a feature of English expansion in this Victorian era that it has never involved war on a great scale, war against a European power. It has been an age of unopposed colonisation on an unprecedented scale. In the Georgian era we possessed not much more than the eastern fringe of North America; now the whole of North America belongs to our race, and in the northern part of it the whole breadth of the continent is loyal to the Queen, while besides North America we occupy the whole continent of Australia. And though our colonies have grown, the burden of them has not grown; the expansion has been so easy that the weight of great continents has strained our federation less than formerly that of slight colonies. How surprising to see in this Victorian age that we do not incur debt; could Waterloo itself console us for the debt as it stood in 1815? After so long an experience the disease might seem incurable, and yet just then was the turning point. Just then we ceased to incur debt; the old fatal propensity, which in the eighteenth century seemed irresistible, has been long left behind. Therefore it is that our expansion over such vast continents has been smooth and secure; its result is seen in the kindly feeling which now reigns between the Mother Country and its boundless colonies.

I have used the Georgian era mainly as a foil to our age. Those wars and controversies of the eighteenth century have indeed for me a deep interest; but one would hardly rank the period between 1737 and 1787 as a whole among the more glorious passages of English history. We do not much cherish the memory of Walpole, Pelham, or Lord North, or of the heroes of the War of Jenkins' Ears, or of the American War. Nor was that by any means a Periclean age of genius and culture. But it had some of the virtues of an age of war. It founded under the elder Pitt a school of valour and heroism, and a conception of public duty raised above

Party which carried us through our harder and longer trial. The Victorian age has not had so much occasion for such heroic virtues. It has been an era of culture, education, philanthropy, art, and science, not specially of patriotic heroism. A talent for holding our own is what the world gives us credit for. When Frenchmen and Germans praise the English race, they ascribe to it the virtue of the mastiff tenacity. I hope we possess this virtue still; it is indispensable for a great nation in circumstances like ours; but when we find occasion to refer to the classical examples of it, we shall meet with them in the period of the great war; that is in the latter part of the Georgian era.

A FIELD FOR ROMANCE.

To any American romancer who may be casting about for a good field to enter with his pen we would suggest the Dominion of Canada and the adjacent British Provinces across our north-eastern border. It is a matter for some surprise, we think, that so little use has been made of the abundant and rich materials for fiction afforded by the scenery and history of these neighbour lands. If we extend the view a little, so as to take in the great lakes, which we must not forget are Canadian or British-American lakes quite as logically, if not quite as largely, as they are our own, and if we widen it still further so as to include the great Hudson's Bay and the majestic Mackenzie River, with the chain of lakes tributary to the latter, there at once opens to us a prospect which, with its historical connections also in view, is extremely stimulating to the imagination. All the representative features of nature—forests, mountains, waters—are here combined into an aggregate of grandeur and beauty which scarcely has a parallel in the western hemisphere. Here is the land of Jacques Cartier, or Quartier, as his name was early written, and of Champlain and Frontenac, not to speak of La Salle and Hennepin, who touched its borders, figures which for picturesque impressiveness are scarcely to be matched on any page of the history of North America. Here is the land of Jesuit and Recollet missionaries, of French and English and Indians, of settlers and *voyageurs*, of Hudson's Bay traders and St. Lawrence River *seigneurs*, of Calvinistic refugees from across the water, and of royalist fugitives from the southern colonies. Here is a land whose history blends discovery and settlement, war and insurrection, earthquake and mob violence, religious controversy and political contention in strong colours. And yet this vast and crowded field, alive with incident and peopled with striking and memorable characters, has so far almost wholly escaped the use of imaginative writers.

Longfellow, indeed, in *Evangeline*, has sung the story of Acadian wrongs and sorrows. Alfred B. Street left a poem on Frontenac. Judge Haliburton's *The Old Judge*, Mr. James de Mille's *The Lily and the Cross*, and Mrs. Williams's *The Neutral French*, have touched some aspects of the French part of the subject. C. W. Hall, in *Twice Taken*, has dealt with the siege of Louisburg; which is also treated in the Rev. David Hickey's *William and Mary*. George Cocking's *The Conquest of Canada* is a dramatic venture. An anonymous writer in 1777 versified *The Death of General Montgomery in Storming Quebec*; and Mr. Howells has made a trip to the Saguenay the motive of his pretty tale of *Their Wedding Journey*. Robert Lowell's *New Priest in Conception Bay* has its scene in Newfoundland, and A. A. Hayes's recent *Jesuit's Ring* uses the rich material for romance bequeathed by the French to the early history of Mount Desert. The Canadians have a respectable but not widely-known local literature. A Miss Barry, under the pseudonym of Vera, has written *Honor Edgeworth*; or, *Ottawa's Past and Present Tense*. Mr. William Kirby, the author of *The U. E.*, a poem in twelve cantos, dealing with the loyalists who founded Upper Canada, has also written *Le Chien d'Or*, which the late Prince Leopold said he meant to have the pleasure of reading in the Citadel of Quebec. Then recently we have had *Constance of Acadia*, an anonymous novel, the heroine of which was Constance La Tour. This, we believe, is about all.* Stay, we must not forget Captain Marryat's *Settlers in Canada*, the delight of many a boyhood, and a fascinating book indeed, though not of the statelier and more dignified order of literature which we now have in view. With the exception of Longfellow's, Marryat's, and Howells' three, and one or two of the others, there is nothing in this list which is of importance as an entry of the field against new comers. And we wonder that the new comers do not appear.

Great possibilities attach themselves to this field, if taken hold of by a master hand, who should do with it and for it what Cooper did for the Indian and the sailor, Hawthorne for early New England life, and even John Esten Cooke for old Virginia. The essential ingredients of landscape, history, heroism, tragedy, and pathos are all here, in rare proportions and fascinating quality.

The land to the south of us, Mexico, has not been wholly neglected, as witness Gen. Lew Wallace's *The Fair God*, that singular composition out of the materials of the ancient Aztec civilisation. But Canada, with its adjuncts, is a land of equal form and colour with Mexico, its romance is of a healthier type, and our sympathy therewith would certainly be far stronger. The Prescott of Mexico, too, is fully matched by the Parkman of Canada; nothing is lacking but the skilled and glowing mind to fuse the mass and mould it into an image instinct with life. If any one of our readers has just returned from Quebec he will feel the truth of what we

* [The writer of this article has overlooked a considerable mass of romantic literature—legends and the like—the production of our French-Canadian *littérateurs*, while from the British-Canadian pen we have the several works of fiction of Mrs. Moody, Mrs. Rothwell, "Seranus," G. Mercer Adam and Miss Wetherald, Watson Griffin, and others whose names will occur to any one familiar with Canadian literature.—ED. THE WEEK.]