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The History of New France According to Francis Parkman

W. J. Eccles*

BETWEEN the years 1851 and 1892 Francis Parkman wrote his epic series, *France and England in North America*. From the date of their first appearance these eight volumes have continued to influence the interpretation of the early history of Canada. Recently, however, some few historians have begun to study the history of New France, not in the works of Parkman, but in the original documents, and their depictions of events and portrayals of the more important personages are markedly at variance with his. This departure cannot be accounted for by the discovery of much new evidence, rather, it arises from the fact that the historian today selects and evaluates historical evidence in the light of values and basic assumptions that differ from those in vogue in Parkman's time.

For example: Parkman, in company with the other Whig historians, always used the concept of Progress to judge the past. He was convinced that the onward march of Progress was inevitable; it might be hindered by reactionary forces, but eventually all opposition would be overcome. It seemed to him that this was as natural a law as that water must run downhill; a river might have to twist and turn, seep slowly through swamps, or it might be dammed, but its onward course could not be halted for long. This was the basic premise that underlay his study of the history of New France. To him it was simply a conflict between the forces of light and the forces of darkness, between the nation of Progress and the nation that stood opposed to it; between Anglo-Saxon Protestant liberty—which was the hallmark of Progress—and French Roman Catholic absolutism. This he made very plain in the final volume of the series when, in writing of the French and Indian War, he declared: "This war was the strife of a united and concentrated few against a divided and discordant many. It

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was the strife, too, of the past against the future; of the old against the new; of moral and intellectual torpor against moral and intellectual life; of barren absolutism against a liberty, crude, incoherent, and chaotic, yet full of prolific vitality."¹

Thus, Parkman regarded the final war not as a war of conquest, but as a war of liberation. The Canadians were not conquered, they were finally liberated from absolutism. The "English conquest," he wrote, "was the grand crisis of Canadian history. It was the beginning of a new life. With England came Protestantism, and the Canadian Church grew purer and better in the presence of an adverse faith. Material growth; an increased mental activity; an education, real though fenced and guarded; a warm and genuine patriotism,—all date from the peace of 1763. England imposed by the sword on reluctant Canada the boon of rational and ordered liberty. . . . A happier calamity never befell a people than the conquest of Canada by the British arms."²

Though his basic theme is, to say the least, debatable, it did enable him to select and organize his material in a simple, coherent framework which makes the completed works very readable. As literature they rate very highly indeed. By means of this device they are endowed with the epic qualities of Greek tragedy. We have the colony of New France, an outpost of French absolutism, struggling heroically against tremendous odds, coming very close to final victory, but eventually, and inevitably, brought low because it has been foreordained that Progress will win out. In the final analysis, French Catholic absolutism cannot, by the very nature of things, prevail against Anglo-Saxon Protestant liberty. As history, however, Parkman's works are of considerably less value because, owing to this frame of reference, his approach was essentially uncritical. There was no need to seek very far to discover why New France was defeated, the reasons were obvious. Nor was there need to discover what society was really like in New France, enough to indicate that it compared very unfavorably with that of the English colonies.

In his description of Canadian society Parkman made extensive use of his source material, relating incidents from the original documents which convey a clear, albeit superficial and distorted impression of the social

¹ Francis Parkman, *Montcalm and Wolfe*, Centenary ed. (Boston, 1922), I, 38.

² Francis Parkman, *The Old Regime in Canada*, Centenary ed. (Boston, 1922), 467-468.

environment. He also used commendable critical judgment on occasion, rejecting, for example, the rather scurrilous tales of La Hontan concerning the morals of the emigrant girls sent to Canada.³ It is clear, however, that his opinion of this society was strongly influenced by the prevailing concept of his own day, that of Social Darwinism. Thus he wrote: "One of the faults of his [Louis XIV's] rule is the excess of his benevolence; for not only did he give money to support parish priests, build churches, and aid the seminary, the Ursulines, the missions, and the hospitals; but he established a fund destined, among other objects, to relieve indigent persons, subsidized nearly every branch of trade and industry, and in other instances did for the colonists what they would far better have learned to do for themselves."⁴ The latter-day historian, accustomed to the social philosophy of the welfare state, would, of course, be less likely to see anything wrong with all this.

Again, in commenting on justice Parkman stated that it "seems to have been administered on the whole fairly; and judges of all grades often interposed in their personal capacity to bring parties to an agreement without a trial. From head to foot, the government kept its attitude of paternity."⁵ Intervention by the intendant to protect the habitants from extortion by their seigneurs he described as "well-meaning despotism."⁶ Similarly, Canadian economic activity suffered from the inexcusable lack of nineteenth-century laissez-faire concepts: "The besetting evil of trade and industry in Canada was the habit they contracted, and were encouraged to contract, of depending on the direct aid of government. Not a new enterprise was set on foot without a petition to the King to lend a helping hand."⁷ This last statement was pure supposition on Parkman's

³ *Ibid.*, 281-282. Yet one might question Parkman's technique here; he quoted La Hontan's sketch of emigrant girls at length, then stated: "As regards the character of the girls, there can be no doubt that this amusing sketch is, in the main, maliciously untrue." If it be untrue, why quote it in this context? He here deliberately created an impression then made a rather feeble attempt to remove it. Parkman was much given to this device; see, for example, *ibid.*, 275 and *n* where, in eulogizing Jean Talon, Parkman wrote "so far as I can discover, he is nowhere accused of making illicit gains, and there is reason to believe that he acquitted himself and his charge with entire fidelity." In the footnote he then proceeded to contradict this statement, to wit: "Some imputations against him, not of much weight, are, however, made in a memorial of Aubert de la Chesnaye, a merchant of Quebec." Contrary to Parkman, the present writer considers La Chesnaye's imputations to have considerable weight.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 347.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 333.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 312-313.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 355.

part; it may be true, but he could never have proved it. Moreover, although there can be no doubt that Canadian economic activity was nowhere near as flourishing as that of the English colonies, less state aid would not have caused it to thrive; just the reverse, more likely.⁸ In any event, this particular yardstick gives very inaccurate measurements.

Parkman's belief in the inevitability of Progress also explains, in large measure, his Olympian style of writing. He had only to select the evidence to prove the obvious; he was never beset with doubts in his interpretation of the evidence; there are none of those cautious, qualifying phrases which are the crutches of many latter-day historians who fear the hostile reviewer. The absence of such weakening phrases gives Parkman's writing strength and clarity, lends it the ring of conviction. This is, of course, greatly strengthened by his use of primary source material. His familiarity with the documents is most praiseworthy; unfortunately, however, lengthy sections of his volumes were put together with scissors and paste, being little more than translations of long passages from the documents. This is particularly true of *The Jesuits in North America* and the two volumes of the inaptly titled *A Half Century of Conflict*. Both works would have been much improved by the liberal use of a blue pencil.

In his treatment of the clergy in New France, it is quite apparent that he was anticlerical, and more particularly, anti-Jesuit; but his prejudice was based squarely on political grounds. That it was what the clergy represented that caused him to go to extremes is evidenced by his denunciation of the Puritan regime in New England in terms almost as strong as those used against the Jesuits, accusing the Puritans of having established "one of the most detestable theocracies on record."⁹ The clergy in both New France and New England were the enemies of liberty of conscience, of Progress. This was their mortal sin. The Jesuits were, he was convinced, far more the political agents of French and Papal absolutism than they were the agents of God. He had great admiration for them as men; their fortitude in the face of terrible hardship and their superhuman courage when tortured by the Iroquois he depicted in glowing passages, but he could never forget that they espoused the wrong cause.

⁸ At the risk of being wearisome, it might be pointed out that Parkman was unaware of the extent to which England subsidized, directly or indirectly, certain economic endeavors of her American colonies.

⁹ Parkman, *Old Regime*, 24.

Liberty may thank the Iroquois [he wrote], that, by their insensate fury, the plans of her adversary were brought to nought, and a peril and a woe averted from her future. . . . The contest on this continent between Liberty and Absolutism was never doubtful; but the triumph of the one would have been dearly bought, and the downfall of the other incomplete. Populations formed in the ideas and habits of a feudal monarchy, and controlled by a hierarchy profoundly hostile to freedom of thought, would have remained a hindrance and a stumbling block in the way of that majestic experiment of which America is the field.

The Jesuits saw their hopes struck down; and their faith, though not shaken, was sorely tried. The Providence of God seemed in their eyes dark and inexplicable; but, from the standpoint of Liberty, that Providence is clear as the sun at noon. Meanwhile let those who have prevailed yield due honor to the defeated. Their virtues shine amidst the rubbish of error, like diamonds and gold in the gravel of the torrent.¹⁰

Such tributes to the Jesuits are rare; diatribes against them, all too frequent. He went to extreme lengths to make the religious climate of New France appear to be one of superstition and ignorance. The description of the life of Mademoiselle Jeanne le Ber was clearly contrived to arouse feelings of repugnance in the reader.¹¹ Education in New France, being under the clergy, was obviously of little value; at the parish schools the children "were taught a little Latin, a little rhetoric, and a little logic; but against all that might rouse the faculties to independent action, the Canadian schools prudently closed their doors."¹² After citing the rules of conduct at the school attached to the Quebec Seminary, he commented: "What is chiefly noticeable in it is, that truth is allowed no place. That manly but unaccommodating virtue was not, it seems, thought important in forming the mind of youth."¹³ Although this fault was noticeable to Parkman, from the evidence available it would not be to those lacking his strong prejudices.

The aims of the Jesuits he succinctly described as: "The Church to rule the world; the Pope to rule the Church; the Jesuits to rule the Pope,—such was and is the simple programme of the Order of Jesus . . ."¹⁴ Thus, when discussing the choice of Laval as bishop at Quebec, he made the

¹⁰ Francis Parkman, *The Jesuits in North America*, Centenary ed. (Boston, 1922), 552-553.

¹¹ Parkman, *Old Regime*, 421-425.

¹² *Ibid.*, 426.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 427.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 153-154.

appointment appear to be a sinister Jesuit plot, stating: "The Jesuits, adepts in human nature, had made a sagacious choice when they put forward this conscientious, zealous, dogged and pugnacious priest to fight their battles. Nor were they ill pleased that, for the present, he was not Bishop of Canada, but only vicar apostolic; for such being the case, they could have him recalled if on trial they did not like him, while an unacceptable bishop would be an evil past remedy."¹⁵ Parkman cited no evidence to support the imputing of these motives to the Jesuits; it was pure supposition on his part.¹⁶ The nature of the evidence, however, lent itself to such hostile interpretations. Since Colbert was notably anticlerical and particularly so of the Jesuits, those in the colony who wished to pay their court to the great minister found a receptive audience when they accused the Jesuits of all manner of crimes. In the letters and dispatches of Jean Talon, Frontenac, La Salle, and La Mothe Cadillac, Parkman found much ammunition, and he invariably accepted their statements at face value. Those of the Jesuits and Bishop Laval, on the other hand, he regarded as inadmissible. Not satisfied with all this, however, he quoted from a sermon delivered by a Jesuit in Montreal on November 1, 1872, to condemn the Jesuits of two centuries earlier.¹⁷ This, one is inclined to think, is carrying prejudice a little too far.

In his characterization of Bishop Laval also, Parkman used rather dubious methods. To introduce this "tool of the Jesuits" he first of all devoted over five pages to the Hermitage at Caen where Laval resided for a time. The description, dwelling at great length on the religious fanaticism of the inmates, was well calculated to stimulate revulsion in the reader. Having thus damned Laval with guilt by association, he rather lamely concluded that although the excesses described "took place after Laval had left the Hermitage, they serve to characterize the school in which he was formed; or, more justly speaking, to show its more extravagant side."¹⁸ Unfortunately, the character of Laval established in the

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 164-165.

¹⁶ Another example, in a different context, of Parkman's imputing of unworthy motives is to be found in *Montcalm and Wolfe*, II, 313. There he claimed, on the basis of no evidence whatsoever, that Vaudreuil's late arrival on the fateful battlefield of the Plains of Abraham at Quebec, Sept. 13, 1759, "was well timed to throw the blame on Montcalm in case of defeat, or to claim some of the honour for himself in case of victory."

¹⁷ Parkman, *Old Regime*, 226.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 146-151.

unwary reader's mind by the preceding five pages of vivid description would not likely be altered by this last brief, qualifying statement. Moreover, Parkman went on to negate this qualification by stating: "In vindicating the assumed rights of the Church, he invaded the rights of others, and used means from which a healthy conscience would have shrunk. . . . He was penetrated by the poisonous casuistry of the Jesuits, based on the assumption that all means are permitted when the end is the service of God" ¹⁹ The Jesuits Parkman could admire as men, but in Laval he could find no redeeming features. Laval had never endured the hardship of life in an Indian village, or withstood torture at the hands of the Iroquois as the Jesuits had. He represented clerical absolutism incarnate, the worst of all the enemies of Progress. Laval, he wrote, "was one of those who by nature lean always to the side of authority; and in the English Revolution he would inevitably have stood for the Stuarts; or, in the American Revolution for the Crown. . . . His life was one long assertion of the authority of the Church, and this authority was lodged in himself." ²⁰ There can be no doubt that Laval was possessed of a strong character—and considering the magnitude of his task, he needed it—but the evidence will not sustain the Laval depicted by Parkman; there are no shades of gray in this portrait, it is all black; in fact it is nothing more than a very hostile caricature.

Parkman's delineation of lay figures is also colored, to a considerable degree, by the theme of Progress; but there are other influences at work as well. He fully subscribed, as one would expect, to the Great Man concept of history—witness his eulogies of Pitt, ²¹ Frederick II, ²² and Washington ²³—and the romantic outlook is also much in evidence. His two full-length studies of outstanding figures, Frontenac and La Salle, illustrate these influences very clearly. There were other men in the history of New France of equal or even greater stature than either of these: Champlain, Charles le Moyne, Iberville, Maisonneuve, Gilles Hocquart, Champigny, to mention a few. Perhaps the main reason why he chose Frontenac and La Salle was that there was so much evidence readily available. La Salle's supporters were prolific writers, and Frontenac was certainly a very skilled

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 227-228.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 164.

²¹ Parkman, *Montcalm and Wolfe*, I, 10-11, II, 45-50.

²² *Ibid.*, I, 19-20, II, 41-42, 401-404, 424.

²³ *Ibid.*, I, 155, 167.

advocate on his own behalf. They had, in fact, virtually written the books for Parkman; he had merely to edit them. Moreover, both men had fought persistently against the clergy in New France; therefore, if they were not exactly on the side of the Angels of Progress, they at least were lending them a hand. Both men had suffered adversity, both had occupied the center of the stage, the one in New France, the other in the West. They were made to order for Parkman. All that was needed, then, was to accept at face value what Frontenac and La Salle said of themselves and refute or disregard evidence that conflicted with their statements. Thus it is that in these volumes Parkman was at his weakest as a historian and at his best as a writer of romantic epic literature.

Frontenac was on one occasion actually made to appear as an apostle of Progress. Of his convoking of the meeting of the four estates at Quebec, Parkman declared: "Like many of his station, Frontenac was not in full sympathy with the centralizing movement of the time, which tended to level ancient rights, privileges, and prescriptions under the ponderous roller of the monarchical administration. He looked back with regret to the day when the three orders of the State—clergy, nobles, and commons—had a place and a power in the direction of national affairs."²⁴ There is not a shred of evidence to support this statement; in fact, Frontenac specifically denied that he had ever had any such intention,²⁵ but Parkman chose to ignore evidence not in accord with his views. Similarly, when Frontenac was finally dismissed from his post and recalled to France in disgrace, Parkman claimed: "he left behind him an impression, very general among the people, that, if danger threatened the colony, Count Frontenac was the man for the hour."²⁶ On the contrary, he left just the reverse impression, and Parkman was clearly ignoring all the evidence.²⁷ Worse still, the reader is led to believe that since Frontenac did return to New France when the colony was in grave danger, he was sent back to

²⁴ Francis Parkman, *Count Frontenac and New France under Louis XIV*, Centenary ed. (Boston, 1922), 19-20.

²⁵ Frontenac declared in his dispatch to Colbert: "I never claimed thereby to form bodies that should subsist, knowing full well of what consequence that could be." Nov. 13, 1673, Series Amérique, V, 346-347, Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Paris.

²⁶ Parkman, *Frontenac and New France*, 75.

²⁷ In 1680 Louis XIV informed Frontenac that New France "runs the risk of being completely destroyed unless you alter both your conduct and your principles. . . ." For a discussion of this question, and Parkman's manner of dealing with it, see my *Frontenac: The Courtier Governor* (Toronto, 1959), 99-126, 153-156, 198-199.

retrieve the situation. Though the evidence denies any such conclusion, several eminent historians have stumbled blindly into the pitfall set by Parkman; and so the myth of Frontenac, the Savior of New France, has been perpetuated. In his final estimate of Frontenac, however, it is clear that it was the turbulent Governor's colorful character that most appealed to him; despite the fact that he had consistently depicted Frontenac as a great man, he declared at the end that "greatness must be denied him."²⁸ Why this should be, he does not explain. One can guess that it was because Frontenac had been engaged on the wrong side in the struggle between absolutism and Progress, and in the final analysis Parkman could not condone this.

In the volume on La Salle, however, Parkman's sympathies were completely engaged for his subject. Any evidence that might have detracted from the luster of this "great man" was swept aside. Perhaps it would be demanding too much to expect Parkman to have ferreted out all the evidence concerning La Salle's connection with the Bernou, Renaudot, Villermont clique of court intriguers, as Jean Delanglez was later to do so admirably,²⁹ but one could expect him to take into account the obvious. And the most obvious thing about La Salle was that he was mentally deranged; moreover, his malady grew markedly worse toward the end of his career. Indeed, the evidence for this is so strong that even Parkman was obliged to mention it, but he did so as the only alternative to admitting that La Salle was a scoundrel. After describing La Salle's actions, which had convinced those associated with him that he must be mad, Parkman stated: "It is difficult not to see in all this the chimera of an overwrought brain, no longer able to distinguish between the possible and the impossible."³⁰ With this matter dismissed, La Salle was thereafter treated as though no doubts as to either his sanity or his probity had ever existed. La Salle, in Parkman's final assessment, was possessed of the "Roman

²⁸ Parkman, *Frontenac and New France*, 459.

²⁹ Jean Delanglez, S. J., *Some La Salle Journeys* (Chicago, 1938), passim.

³⁰ Francis Parkman, *La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West* (Boston, 1899), 363. See also *ibid.*, 348-349, where Parkman described the scheme La Salle proposed to the Court for founding a colony on the Gulf of Mexico and where he stated: "This memorial bears some indications of being drawn up in order to produce a certain effect on the minds of the King and his minister. . . . Such a procedure may be charged with indirectness; but there is a different explanation, which we shall suggest hereafter, and which implies no such reproach." Thus, La Salle's "indirectness" was here neatly dismissed. The only explanation that is later suggested was that La Salle's brain was "overwrought."

virtues" and, "beset by a throng of enemies, he stands, like the King of Israel, head and shoulders above them all."³¹ There is the Great Man concept; and along with it goes the final and even greater tribute: "America owes him an enduring memory; for in this masculine figure she sees the pioneer who guided her to the possession of her richest heritage."³² Here, in the eyes of Parkman, lies the true greatness of La Salle for which all else must be forgiven. He was, after all, the herald of Progress.

In his attitude toward the North American Indians, however, Parkman shed all his romanticism. "The English borderers," he wrote, "regarded the Indians less as men than as vicious and dangerous wild animals. In fact, the benevolent and philanthropic view of the American savage is for those who are beyond his reach: it has never yet been held by any whose wives and children have lived in danger of his scalping-knife."³³ To Parkman the Indian was not the noble savage, but a treacherous, murdering, fiend incarnate, existing in filth and squalor—an opinion perhaps influenced by his close contacts with the Plains Indians at a time when the Americans were bent on exterminating the remnants of this Stone Age civilization. But there is more to it than that. To Parkman the Indians were nothing more than a stumbling block in the path of Progress. Of the Iroquois, the best that could be said was that they had aided the English colonies in their wars against French absolutism and had foiled the Jesuit schemes to create a native theocracy in Huronia. But for the other tribes, particularly those that fought against New England, there could be little justification for their existence. Of one such tribe he wrote: "Far worse than wolves or rattlesnakes were the Pequot Indians,—a warlike race who had boasted that they would wipe the whites from the face of the earth, but who, by hard marching and fighting, had lately been brought to reason."³⁴

In depicting the raids by the Canadians and their Indian allies on the frontiers of the English colonies, Parkman gave us his most vivid writing. Reading his description of the Deerfield massacre, or the attacks on the western frontier during the Seven Years' War, makes one feel almost as though he were a participant—but always on the English side. These raids

³¹ *Ibid.*, 431-432.

³² *Ibid.*, 432.

³³ Francis Parkman, *A Half Century of Conflict*, Centenary ed. (Boston, 1922), I, 223.

³⁴ Parkman, *Old Regime*, 23-24.

were invariably treated as savage, unprovoked aggression against innocent English colonial settlers, and gory details were presented to strengthen the case; to the Deerfield raid alone he devoted thirty-nine pages.³⁵ He was quite unable to conceive that the Indian tribes were fighting desperately against overwhelming odds to retain their ancient hunting grounds in the face of English encroachment. He could not view the struggle from the other camp, that of the Indian. Nor did he ever ask himself why the Indians should have been expected to fight according to European rules of warfare. That it may, at bottom, have been the English colonials who were the aggressors and the Indians, the victims never occurred to him. They had dared to stand in the path of Progress; this made their eradication both essential and inevitable.

If Parkman was, to say the least, severe in his judgment on the Indians, he was virulent in his condemnation of the French for aiding and inciting them against the English colonies. That these same colonies incited the Iroquois against New France was of no account. And when the French most directly concerned happened to be priests as well, the acts committed were clearly beyond the pale. Of Abbé Jean le Loutre he declared: "He fed [the Micmacs'] traditional dislike of the English, and fanned their fanaticism, born of the villainous counterfeit of Christianity which he and his predecessors had imposed on them."³⁶ Of Father Sebastien Rale, the Jesuit missionary with the Abenakis, he was less censorious, largely because this missionary was killed in a raid by New Englanders on an Abenakis village. Because Father Rale died bravely he was accorded a grudging tribute³⁷ which compares unfavorably with that given to Jonathan Frye, an Andover chaplain killed while accompanying a New England war party against the Pequawket tribe. "Chaplain though he was," wrote Parkman admiringly, "he carried a gun, knife, and hatchet like the others, and not one of the party was more prompt to use them."³⁸ In consequence of this raid, the hostile Indians were cowed, and Parkman described the results thus: "In our day . . . farms and dwellings possess those peaceful

³⁵ Yet, to the Lachine massacre, perpetrated by the Iroquois on the Canadians, and an event of greater significance than the Deerfield raid, Parkman devoted only four pages. It would appear that much depended on whose scalp was being lifted. Compare Parkman's *Half Century of Conflict*, I, 55-93, and his *Frontenac and New France*, 185-189.

³⁶ Parkman, *Montcalm and Wolfe*, I, 118.

³⁷ Parkman, *Half Century of Conflict*, I, 248-249.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 260.

shores, and hard by, where, at the bend of the Saco, once stood, in picturesque squalor, the wigwams of the vanished Pequawkets, the village of Fryeburg preserves the name of the brave young chaplain, whose memory is still cherished, in spite of his uncanonical turn for scalping."³⁹ Again, one who assisted, in however small measure, the march of Progress had to be forgiven much. It is doubtful if Parkman realized how close he came here to the casuistry which he saw so clearly and condemned so vehemently in the Jesuits.

The final picture of New France that emerges from a reading of this series is one that is not altogether unsympathetic. Parkman frequently paid tribute to qualities that he found admirable in the Canadians, although in a rather patronizing manner. He admired, for example, their courage, their fortitude, and the romantic aura of this frontier breed. But he could never really forgive them for being so obstinately French, Roman Catholic, and subjects of a supposedly absolute monarch. "As a bold and hardy pioneer of the wilderness," he wrote, "the Frenchman in America has rarely found his match. [But] his civic virtues withered under the despotism of Versailles, and his mind and conscience were kept in leading-strings by an absolute Church . . ." ⁴⁰

Parkman brought to his task the gifts of historical imagination, the willingness to consult all the available source material, and considerable talent as a writer. Thus he was able to create very vivid pictures in the mind's eye of the reader and to enable him to live in the past for a brief spell; but the reader always views this past through Parkman's own Whig-colored spectacles. Most of his faults were the faults of his age and these must be forgiven him; but this does not mean that they must be overlooked. His works have served us well, for perhaps too many years. In fact, it might almost be said that he performed his task too well, and the consequences have been disastrous for the study of the history of Canada. It gave rise to the belief, amongst English-speaking historians at least, that Parkman had said all that needed to be said about the history of New France, and that there was no need to do any further research.⁴¹

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 268-269.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 346.

⁴¹ This view is implicit in the statement by Robin W. Winks in his *Recent Trends and New Literature in Canadian History*, Service Center for Teachers of History, A Service of the American Historical Association, No. 19 (Washington, 1959), 28: "The struggle for North America. Little that is new has been said, and one suspects there is little new to be said, about the Old Régime in North America."

Clearly, this condition cannot endure much longer. It is to be hoped that before too many years have passed, Parkman's works will be relegated to the same shelf as those of his contemporaries, George Bancroft, William Prescott, and John Motley, where they will be consulted more by the student of American literature or historiography than by the student of history.