

Poor Eleanor! she realizes the situation only too well.

February 23. I am so happy that there are no words in the English language to tell my delight. Edward Morris is out of danger. He will be an invalid for a year or two, as he will not be able to use his brain much for a long time; but Edward Morris without a head is so much nicer than any other man with one that it does not matter, and—he is going to get well!!!! I have put all those exclamation points in a row to help faintly to express my feelings. They stand for joy, rapture, happiness, and every other blissful thing.

Eleanor is perfectly calm, as usual, but the whole expression of her face has changed, and she looks absolutely se-

raphic. Edward knew her yesterday; and when she came home I could see that something unusual had happened.

"It is all right, Julia," she replied to my eager questions.

"What did he say, dear?" I asked. "How did he look? What did you say? Tell me all about it."

"I cannot tell you what we said, but we have explained everything."

"Can't you tell me just one little thing?" I pleaded.

Eleanor began to laugh softly. "He said something when I first came in which will amuse you, Julia. He asked what day it was. 'Saturday,' I replied. 'Saturday? Eleanor, how good you were to come here instead of going to the Saturday Morning Club!'"

Eliza Orne White.

FRANCIS PARKMAN.

I.

LET us go back nearly fifty years to scenes in the Black Hills and upon the upper waters of the Missouri Valley. In that wild environment we shall find a young graduate of Harvard College. He has exchanged the garb of civilization for the red flannel shirt and the fringed buckskin suit of the hunter. The sleek ambler of suburban roads has given place to the shaggy but docile beast of the wilderness, and there is a rifle laid across the saddlebow.

You may see a band of Dacotahs dashing, with streaming hair, upon the flanks of a buffalo herd, and conspicuous in the onset are the red shirt and buckskin of this transient denizen of the desert.

This youth had dreamed from childhood of a forest life. His school vacations had been spent in the New England woods. There he had studied the ever-changing aspects of nature. He had found

moods in the sky. He had watched the flowers nodding to the brook. He knew the sounds of woodland life. With an imagination sporting with weird illusions and helped by legends, a crackling branch or the moan of the wind would call up the terrors of a frontier life to which his ancestors had been accustomed. Born with an organization of body treacherously delicate, he had a spirit which spurned repose. He knew little of danger but the dash which led to it. He had the mettle for great deeds. If he could not enact such deeds, he could at least follow the actors in sympathizing recital. Amid the wilds of the Platte he experienced that spirit of energy which, as he contended, the mountains always impart to those who approach them. He sought in the excitement of their presence that rigidity of nerve which was the best substitute for the strength which failed him.

We may get another glimpse of him in the dingy shadows of the lodge of

Big Crow. The dying embers scarcely relieve his form from the almost impenetrable gloom. A squaw throws a bit of bear's fat upon the coals, and the shooting flames light up the pallid features and firm-set jaw of this plucky youth. The braves are crouching about the hearth, speaking of the coming hunt. The young man conceals all symptoms of that exhaustion under which his endurance is to be put to the severest test in the morrow's ride. Thus in the nurture of bravery this wan observer learned to know his dusky companions. He came to comprehend those traits which were confronted with the hardihood of Nicolet, and which he witnessed with the eyes of Brébeuf.

To describe the long years of patient restraint and hopeful study which followed belongs to his biographer. He who shall tell that story of noble endeavor must carry him into the archives of Canada and France, and portray him peering with another's eyes. He must depict him in his wanderings over the length and breadth of a continent wherever a French adventurer had set foot. He must track him to many a spot hallowed by the sacrifice of a Jesuit. He must plod with him the portage where the burdened trader had hearkened for the lurking savage. He must stroll with him about the ground of ambush which had rung with the death-knell, and must survey the field or defile where the lilies of France had glimmered in the smoke of battle. He who would represent him truly must tell of that hardy courage which the assaults of pain could never lessen. He must describe the days, and months, and even years when the light of the sun was intolerable. He must speak of the intervals, counted only by half-hours, when a secretary could read to him. Such were the obstacles which for more than fifty years gave his physicians little hope.

It is but a few years since I went with a party of students from Harvard College, across the neighboring country,

to a stately home graced by the venerable presence of him who bears one of the earliest and greatest of the historic names of New England. The rank grass of the rolling prairie, the clink of the pony's hoof in the wild defile, the charge of the infuriated bull, the impetuous young hunter reeling in his saddle, were things that belonged to the young ambition of forty years before. The youth, now grown in fame, stood among the guests of that summer afternoon to receive the homage of these gathered visitors. Leaning upon his staff, with an eye of kindly interest, the great historian received his unknown pupils. I recall how I felt standing beside him; that the rolling lawn with its exquisite finish, and the shade of the trees grouped in conscious gravity as if mindful of a completed nature, were in fit unison with that well-rounded reputation which belonged to him who stood before them.

And what did Francis Parkman stand for, in these later years, to such young disciples?

Before he had graduated from college there had sprung up in America a new school of historical writing. Most of the members of it were in Cambridge and in Boston, growing with the libraries, public and private, which in those days were most conspicuous in that region, and which are a necessity in historical development. It was only two years before Parkman became a freshman at Harvard that the first chair of history in any American college was filled there by Jared Sparks, and it was to this Mentor that the young historian was later to inscribe his first venture in historic narrative. When Jared Sparks took his place behind a professor's desk, George Bancroft had been before the public for four years with the initial volume of his life work. When Sparks, a few years later, became the instructor of Parkman, the service which that professor had already done to our own his-

tory was the most conspicuous that any American had rendered. Sparks had then completed the first series of his *American Biography*. He had told in it, for the first time, with scrupulous care, the stories of French discoveries in the great West, where his young friend was to follow him. He had edited the *Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution*, had written the *Life of Gouverneur Morris*, and had established for his countrymen the ideals of Washington and Franklin.

In strong contrast both in subject and method with what Bancroft and Sparks were doing, and much nearer the model which the young aspirant already figured, was a new writer, who, in the very year when Sparks assumed his professorship, made the name of Prescott synonymous with the best that our western scholarship in history at that time could hope to offer for European distinction.

Parkman had already published his *Pontiac*, and had lapsed into a condition of body that made it seem as if his genius were to be permanently eclipsed by his infirmities, when a still more brilliant opening of a career was signalized by the appearance of *The Rise of the Dutch Republic*. Ten years were to pass before Parkman could produce the first of that series of books with which his name is indissolubly connected, and by which he has made the story of the rise and decline of the French rule in North America entirely his own. By this time, Motley, in his *United Netherlands*, had rounded the measure of his fame, and Prescott and Sparks had left us.

In these four conspicuous historians, who thus conjointly relieved their countrymen from any reproach for want of distinction in a dignified branch of letters, Parkman had examples of brilliant merit, and their careers supplied to his recuperated energy incentives and models. The rising historian was now in his forty-third year, but his mind had been drilled under such exactions and had been

forced to such restraints as few men had ever encountered. Remembering this, we can better understand the remarkable repression of superfluities in the treatment of his themes. He was too genuine to be an imitator, but the eclectic instinct had become strongly developed by his being obliged to hold in his memory what had been read to him. It is not difficult to see how the school of American historians that had grown up in these forty years had an influence upon him, while at the same time his own independence of character enabled him to emancipate himself from any thralldom.

In two, at least, of these contemporary historians there were symptoms of a still older school of historical writers. These had subjected historical documents, especially if the contributions of actors in the scene, to the revision of the pedagogue. It was a fashion never stronger anywhere than in New England, where the characteristics of ancestors have always been viewed tenderly.

The treatment of such material was a test in Parkman's mind of what may be called an historical integrity. I remember hearing him once make a strong protest (in a way which was always more incisive in his talk than in his books) against this misuse of revision. He believed that the actual record made in the thick of a conflict, and not a decorous paraphrase of it, was the true one. "In mending the style and orthography, or even the grammar," he said, "one may rob a passage of its characteristic expression, till it ceases to mark the individuality of the man, or the nature of his antecedents and surroundings." Speaking again of editorial glosses of the letters of Dinwiddie, Parkman referred to their "good English without character, while as written they were bad English with a great deal of character. The blunders themselves," he adds, "have meaning, for Dinwiddie was a blunderer, and should appear as such if he is to appear truly."

Such utterances as these made honesty

of citation one of the things that Parkman stood for to those young men on that summer's day.

Again, he had before him in one, at least, of his contemporaries a too conscientious habit of infusing into the narrative a somewhat vapid philosophical sentiment, running at times into platitudes. The skill of Parkman in telling a story required no such adventitious aid to impart a meaning. He made the course of events carry its own philosophy. This was another thing in historical science which Parkman stood for.

I recollect he once said to me that he had never ceased to regret that he had written that portion of his *Pioneers* which covers the conflict of Spaniard and Huguenot on our southern coast without first having visited the sites of the action of the story, so that he could write of the topography and surrounding nature with personal knowledge. I happened to see him at a later day, when he had the revision of that volume in hand, and he was to start on the morrow for a Southern tour. He seemed to feel like a man who had made up his mind to undo an injustice. He had a feeling that his fame was at stake if this journey of apology were not made. Here again it was for the integrity of his art that Parkman stood to those young men.

There was a period in the French domination in Canada, intervening between the death of Frontenac and the more immediate beginning of the great struggle for the possession of a continent, a half-century of conflict, in which events were sporadic, and the tensions of cause and effect were loosened. He shrank from it with the instincts of an epic poet. It had no beginning, no culmination, but to tell its disjointed story was a part of his task. The study of it came next in the order of progress; but I know the delight with which he welcomed the chance of using the Montcalm papers which had come to him, as it gave an excuse to postpone his work

on the wearying monotony of border ferocities, and to grasp the splendid details of an historic climax.

But this love of his art did not swerve him from his lifelong purpose, and the last work which he has given us shows the completion of his labors, in which he struggled with the infelicities of that bewildering period of minor conflicts with the courage that belonged to him. It was this faithfulness to an artistic ideal, no less than a steady adherence to his plan, that Parkman also stood for to those inquiring minds.

There is nothing that separates the modern spirit from the old-time conventionalism more clearly than the perception that much, perhaps one might almost say very much, of what we read for history is simply the accretion, inherited from many generations of narrators, of opinions and prejudices and sentiment. It requires some courage to strip the mummied fact of these cerements of sympathies. Parkman, as the opportune forerunner of the newer historic sense, showed this courage never more conspicuously than in his treatment of the deportation of the Acadians. Ideal virtues were subjected by him to crucial tests, and he dared to tell the world that the figments which make a poem are not the truths that underlie the story. This courage, unbending to criticism, was one of the noblest qualities that our friend stood for to those who believe that truth is not to be bartered for prejudice or for an affected sensibility, or even made to yield to the misguided assumptions of what is sometimes held to be the demands of religion.

Parkman has been said to represent in the highest degree the picturesque element in the schools of history. It is an element which is better calculated than any other to engage attention and secure fame. It is also an element that naturally flourishes with the graceful aids of a brilliant style. But it is a characteristic that is apt to make us forget the consum-

mate research which, in the case of Parkman, accompanied it. He is certainly less demonstrative of his material than is now the fashion; but while, in this suppression, he sometimes disappoints the students who would track his movements, there is no question that he has gained in popular regard. But even the scholar sees that he has left some things untold, not because he did not know them, but because his sense of proportion was that of an artist rather than of a chronicler.

I would say to any young student of history that he could make no more fortunate choice for Mentor than Parkman. He can be valued not only for what he accomplished, but for the obstacles he overcame, whether of his condition or his subject. He had been obliged to print his *Discovery of the Great West* with a consciousness that some essential material was beyond his reach. The keeper of an important department of the French Archives had been so far unfaithful to his trust as to reserve for his own private use some of its documentary proofs. Parkman was aware of the fact, but the publication of his book could hardly be delayed in the hope of a disclosure of which there was no promise. At a later day, it was largely through the instrumentality of the disappointed historian that this recusant archivist was enabled to make his own collection public by the aid of the American government. The consequent revelations would have daunted a less determined spirit than Park-

man's, when he found that he was obliged, because of the new disclosures, in considerable parts to rewrite his book. There is nothing more discouraging to an historian than these recurrent revelations when a work is supposed to be done. The lesson should not be lost: it is always hazardous to be determinate on insufficient knowledge, and pardonable only when every effort, as in Parkman's case, has been exhausted.

In a field in which so much is in the process of development as in American history, it is doubly to be regretted that such an historian as Parkman was, so perfect in his art of collocation, should not have been able to complete a final revision of his works, and embody the latest evidences which had accumulated. With this purpose in view, and with the expectation, which he sometimes expressed to me, that he might yet run his monographs into one connected story, he died with his harness on. He has left us with the glories of the victor and the honors of the vanquished, like his own Wolfe and Montcalm. In Francis Parkman we have laid away the warrior who had long waged a stubborn fight, and without a buckler, with the physical ills which beset him. Nature has parted with a student of her mysteries who taught even the lilies an unwonted florescence. The historian has gone to the companionship of Marquette and La Salle, to the presence of Champlain and Frontenac.

Justin Winsor.

II.

In the summer of 1865 I had occasion almost daily to pass by the pleasant windows of Little, Brown & Co., in Boston, and it was not an easy thing to do without stopping for a moment to look in upon their ample treasures. Among the freshest novelties there displayed were to be seen Lord Derby's translation of

the *Iliad*, Forsyth's *Life of Cicero*, Colonel Higginson's *Epictetus*, a new edition of Edmund Burke's writings, and the tasteful reprint of Froude's *History of England*, just in from the Riverside Press. One day, in the midst of such time-honored classics and new books on well-worn themes, there appeared a stranger that claimed attention and aroused curiosity. It was a modest crown oc-

tavo, clad in sombre garb, and bearing the title *Pioneers of France in the New World*. The author's name was not familiar to me, but presently I remembered having seen it upon a stouter volume labeled *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*, of which many copies used to stand in a row far back in the inner and dusky regions of the shop. This older book I had once taken down from its shelf just to quiet a lazy doubt as to whether Pontiac might be the name of a man or a place. Had that conspiracy been an event in Merovingian Gaul or in Borgia's Italy, I should have felt a twinge of conscience at not knowing about it, but the deeds of feathered and painted red men on the Great Lakes and the Alleghanies, only a century old, seemed remote and trivial. Indeed, with the old-fashioned study of the humanities, which tended to keep the Mediterranean too exclusively in the centre of one's field of vision, it was not always easy to get one's historical perspective correctly adjusted. Scenes and events that come within the direct line of our spiritual ancestry, which until yesterday was all in the Old World, become unduly magnified, so as to deaden our sense of the interest and importance of the things that have happened since our forefathers went forth to grapple with the terrors of an outlying wilderness. We find no difficulty in realizing the historic significance of Marathon and Châlons, of the barons at Runnymede or Luther at Wittenberg; and scarcely a hill or a meadow in the Roman's Europe but blooms for us with flowers of romance. Literature and philosophy, art and song, have expended their richest treasures in adding to the witchery of Old World spots and Old World themes.

But as we learn to broaden our horizon the perspective becomes somewhat shifted. It begins to dawn upon us that in New World events there is a rare and potent fascination. Not only is there the interest of their present importance, which nobody would be likely to deny, but there

is the charm of an historic past as full of romance as any chapter whatever in the annals of mankind. The Alleghanies as well as the Apennines have looked down upon great causes lost and won, and the Mohawk Valley is classic ground no less than the banks of the Rhine. To appreciate these things thirty years ago required the vision of a master in the field of history; and when I carried home and read the *Pioneers of France*, I saw at once that in Francis Parkman we had found such a master. The reading of the book was for me, as doubtless for many others, a pioneer experience in this New World. It was a delightful experience, repeated and prolonged for many a year as those glorious volumes came one after another from the press, until the story of the struggle between France and England for the possession of North America was at last completed. It was an experience of which the full significance required study in many and apparently diverse fields to realize. By step after step one would alight upon new ways of regarding America and its place in universal history.

First and most obvious, plainly visible from the threshold of the subject, was its extreme picturesqueness. It is a widespread notion that American history is commonplace and dull; and as for the American red man, he is often thought to be finally disposed of when we have stigmatized him as a bloodthirsty demon and groveling beast. It is safe to say that those who entertain such notions have never read Mr. Parkman. In the theme which occupied him his poet's eye saw nothing that was dull or commonplace. To bring him vividly before us, I will quote his own words from one of the introductory pages of his opening volume:

"The French dominion is a memory of the past, and when we evoke its departed shades they rise upon us from their graves in strange, romantic guise. Again their ghostly camp fires seem to burn, and the fitful light is cast around on lord and vassal and black-robed priest, mingled

with wild forms of savage warriors, knit in close fellowship on the same stern errand. A boundless vision grows upon us: an untamed continent; vast wastes of forest verdure; mountains silent in primeval sleep; river, lake, and glimmering pool; wilderness oceans mingling with the sky. Such was the domain which France conquered for civilization. Plumed helmets gleamed in the shade of its forests, priestly vestments in its dens and fastnesses of ancient barbarism. Men steeped in antique learning, pale with the close breath of the cloister, here spent the noon and evening of their lives, ruled savage hordes with a mild, parental sway, and stood serene before the direst shapes of death. Men of courtly nurture, heirs to the polish of a far-reaching ancestry, here, with their dauntless hardihood, put to shame the boldest sons of toil."

When a writer, in sentences that are mere generalizations, gives such pictures as these, one has much to expect from his detailed narrative glowing with sympathy and crowded with incident. In Parkman's books such expectations are never disappointed. What was an uncouth and howling wilderness in the world of literature he has taken for his own domain, and peopled it forever with living figures, dainty and winsome, or grim and terrible, or sprightly and gay. Never shall be forgotten the beautiful earnestness, the devout serenity, the blithe courage of Champlain; never can we forget the saintly Marie de l'Incarnation, the delicate and long-suffering Lalemant, the lion-like Brébeuf, the chivalrous Maison-neuve, the grim and wily Pontiac, or that man against whom fate sickened of contending, the mighty and masterful La Salle. These, with many a comrade and foe, have now their place in literature as permanent and sure as Tancred or St. Boniface, as the Cid or Robert Bruce. As the wand of Scott revealed unsuspected depths of human interest in Border castle and Highland glen, so it seems that North America was but awaiting the ma-

gician's touch that should invest its rivers and hillsides with memories of great days gone by. Parkman's sweep has been a wide one, and many are the spots that his wand has touched, from the cliffs of the Saguenay to the Texas coast, and from Acadia to the western slopes of the Rocky Mountains.

I do not forget that earlier writers than Parkman had felt something of the picturesqueness and the elements of dramatic force in the history of the conquest of our continent. In particular, the characteristics of the red men and the incidents of forest life had long before been made the theme of novels and poems, such as they were. I wonder how many people of to-day remember even the names of such books as *Yonnonديو* or *Kabaosa*. All such work was thrown into the shade by that of Fenimore Cooper, whose genius, though limited, was undeniable. But when we mention Cooper, we are brought at once, by contrast, to the secret of Parkman's power. It has long been recognized that Cooper's Indians are more or less unreal. Just such creatures never existed anywhere. When Corneille and Racine put ancient Greeks or Romans on the stage, they dressed them in velvet and gold lace, flowing wigs and high buckled shoes, and made them talk like Louis XIV.'s courtiers. In seventeenth-century dramatists the historical sense was lacking. In the next age it was not much better. When Rousseau had occasion to philosophize about men in a state of nature, he invented the noble savage, an insufferable creature whom any real savage would justly loathe and despise. The noble savage has figured extensively in modern literature, and has left his mark upon Cooper's pleasant pages, as well as upon many a chapter of serious history. But you cannot introduce unreal Indians as factors in the development of a narrative without throwing a shimmer of unreality about the whole story. It is like bringing in ghosts or goblins among live men

and women; it instantly converts sober narrative into fairy tale; the two worlds will no more mix than oil and water. The ancient and mediæval minds did not find it so, as the numberless histories encumbered with the supernatural testify, but the modern mind does find it so. The modern mind has taken a little draught, the prelude to deeper draughts, at the healing and purifying well of science, and it has begun to be dissatisfied with anything short of exact truth. When any unsound element enters into a narrative, the taint is quickly tasted, and its flavor spoils the whole.

We are thus brought, I say, to the secret of Parkman's power. His Indians are true to the life. In his pages Pontiac is a man of warm flesh and blood, as much so as Montcalm or Israel Putnam. This solid reality in the Indians makes the whole work real and convincing. Here is the great contrast between Parkman's work and that of Prescott in so far as the latter dealt with American themes. In reading Prescott's account of the conquest of Mexico one feels one's self in the world of the Arabian Nights; indeed, the author himself, in occasional comments, lets us see that he is unable to get rid of just such a feeling. His story moves on in a region that is unreal to him, and therefore tantalizing to the reader; his Montezuma is a personality like none that ever existed beneath the moon. This is because Prescott simply followed his Spanish authorities not only in their statements of physical fact, but in their inevitable misconceptions of the strange Aztec society which they encountered; the Aztecs in his story are unreal, and this false note vitiates it all. In his Peruvian story Prescott followed safer leaders in Garcilasso de la Vega and Cieza de Leon, and made a much truer picture; but he lacked the ethnological knowledge needful for coming into touch with that ancient society, and one often feels this as the weak spot in a narrative of marvelous power and beauty.

Now, it was Parkman's good fortune, at an early age, to realize that, in order to do his work, it was first of all necessary to know the Indian by personal fellowship and contact. It was also his good fortune that the right sort of Indians were still accessible. What would not Prescott have given, what would not any student of human evolution give, for a chance to pass a week, or even a day, in such a community as the *Tlascalala* of *Xicotencatl* or the Mexico of *Montezuma*! That phase of social development has long since disappeared. But fifty years ago, on our great Western plains and among the Rocky Mountains, there still prevailed a state of society essentially similar to that which greeted the eyes of Champlain upon the St. Lawrence, and of John Smith upon the *Chickahominy*. In those days the Oregon Trail had changed but little since the memorable journey of Lewis and Clark. In 1846, two years after taking his bachelor degree at Harvard, young Parkman had a taste of the excitements of savage life in that primeval wilderness. He was accompanied by his kinsman, Mr. Quincy Shaw. They joined a roving tribe of Sioux Indians, at a time when to do such a thing was to take their lives in their hands, and they spent a wild summer among the Black Hills of Dakota, and in the vast moorland solitudes through which the Platte River winds its interminable length. In the chase and in the wigwam, in watching the sorcery of which the Indian religion chiefly consisted or in listening to primitive folk-tales by the evening camp fire, Mr. Parkman learned to understand the red man, to interpret his motives and his moods. With his naturalist's keen and accurate eye and his quick poetic apprehension, that youthful experience formed a safe foundation for all his future work. From that time forth he was fitted to absorb the records and memorials of the early explorers, and to make their strange experiences his own.

The next step was to gather these early records from government archives, and from libraries public and private, on both sides of the Atlantic, — a task, as Parkman himself called it, “abundantly irksome and laborious.” It extended over many years, and involved seven visits to Europe. It was performed with a thoroughness approaching finality. Already in the preface to the *Pioneers* the author was able to say that he had gained access to all the published materials in existence. Of his research among manuscript sources a notable monument exists in a cabinet now standing in the library of the Massachusetts Historical Society, containing nearly two hundred folio volumes of documents copied from the originals by hired experts. Ability to incur heavy expense is, of course, a prerequisite for all undertakings of this sort, and herein our historian was favored by fortune. Against this chiefest among advantages were to be offset the hardships entailed by delicate health and inability to use the eyes for reading and writing. Mr. Parkman always dictated instead of holding the pen, and his huge mass of documents had to be read aloud to him. The heroism shown year after year in contending with physical ailments was the index of a character fit to be mated, for its pertinacious courage, with the heroes that live in his shining pages.

The progress in working up materials was slow and sure. The *Conspiracy of Pontiac*, which forms the sequel and conclusion of Parkman's work, was first published in 1851, only five years after the summer spent with the Indians. Fourteen years then elapsed before the *Pioneers* made its appearance in Little, Brown & Co.'s window; and then there were yet seven-and-twenty years more before the final volumes came out in 1892. Altogether about half a century was required for the building of this grand literary monument. Nowhere can we find a better illustration of the French

critic's definition of a great life, — a thought conceived in youth, and realized in later years.

This elaborateness of preparation had its share in producing the intense vividness of Mr. Parkman's descriptions. Profusion of detail makes them seem like the accounts of an eye-witness. The realism is so strong that the author seems to have come in person fresh from the scenes he describes, with the smoke of the battle hovering about him and its fierce light glowing in his eyes. Such realism is usually the prerogative of the novelist rather than of the historian, and in one of his prefaces Mr. Parkman recognizes that the reader may feel this and suspect him. “If at times,” he says, “it may seem that range has been allowed to fancy, it is so in appearance only, since the minutest details of narrative or description rest on authentic documents or on personal observation.”¹

This kind of personal observation Mr. Parkman carried so far as to visit all the important localities — indeed, well-nigh all the localities — that form the scenery of his story, and study them with the patience of a surveyor and the discerning eye of a landscape painter. His strong love of nature added keen zest to this sort of work. From boyhood he was a trapper and hunter; in later years he became eminent as a horticulturist, originating new varieties of flowers. To sleep under the open sky was his delight. His books fairly reek with the fragrance of pine woods. I open one of them at random, and my eye falls upon such a sentence as this: “There is softness in the mellow air, the warm sunshine, and the budding leaves of spring, and in the forest flower, which, more delicate than the pampered offspring of gardens, lifts its tender head through the refuse and decay of the wilderness.” Looking at the context, I find that this sentence comes in a remarkable passage suggested by Colonel Henry Bouquet's *Western ex-*

¹ *Pioneers*, page xii.

pedition of 1764, when he compelled the Indians to set free so many French and English prisoners. Some of these captives were unwilling to leave the society of the red men; some positively refused to accept the boon of what was called freedom. In this strange conduct, exclaims Parkman, there was no unaccountable perversity; and he breaks out with two pages of noble dithyrambs in praise of savage life. "To him who has once tasted the reckless independence, the haughty self-reliance, the sense of irresponsible freedom which the forest life engenders, civilization thenceforth seems flat and stale. . . . The entrapped wanderer grows fierce and restless, and pants for breathing-room. His path, it is true, was choked with difficulties, but his body and soul were hardened to meet them; it was beset with dangers, but these were the very spice of his life, gladdening his heart with exulting self-confidence, and sending the blood through his veins with a livelier current. The wilderness, rough, harsh, and inexorable, has charms more potent in their seductive influence than all the lures of luxury and sloth. And often he on whom it has cast its magic finds no heart to dissolve the spell, and remains a wanderer and an Ishmaelite to the hour of his death."¹

No one can doubt that the man who could write like this had the kind of temperament that could look into the Indian's mind and portray him correctly. But for this inborn temperament all his microscopic industry would have availed him but little. To use his own words, "Faithfulness to the truth of history involves far more than a research, however patient and scrupulous, into special facts. Such facts may be detailed with the most minute exactness, and yet the narrative, taken as a whole, may be unmeaning or untrue." These are golden words for the student of the historical art to ponder. To make a

¹ Pontiac, ii. 237.

truthful record of a vanished age patient scholarship is needed, and something more. Into the making of an historian there should enter something of the philosopher, something of the naturalist, something of the poet. In Parkman this rare union of qualities was realized in a greater degree than in any other American historian. Indeed, I doubt if the nineteenth century can show in any part of the world another historian quite his equal in this respect.

There is one thing which lends to Parkman's work a peculiar interest, and will be sure to make it grow in fame with the ages. Not only has he left the truthful record of a vanished age so complete and final that the work will never need to be done again, but if any one should in the future attempt to do it again, he cannot approach the task with quite such equipment as Parkman's. In an important sense, the age of Pontiac is far more remote from us than the age of Clovis or the age of Agamemnon. When barbaric society is overwhelmed by advancing waves of civilization, its vanishing is final; the thread of tradition is cut off forever with the shears of Fate. Where are Montezuma's Aztecs? Their physical offspring still dwell on the table-land of Mexico and their ancient speech is still heard in the streets, but that old society is as extinct as the dinosaurs, and has to be painfully studied in fossil fragments of custom and tradition. So with the red men of the North; it is not true that they are dying out physically, but their stage of society is fast disappearing, and soon it will have vanished forever. Soon their race will be swallowed up and forgotten, just as we overlook and ignore to-day the existence of five thousand Iroquois farmers in the State of New York.

Now the study of comparative ethnology has begun to teach us that the red Indian is one of the most interesting of men. He represents a stage of evolution through which civilized men

have once passed, — a stage far more ancient and primitive than that which is depicted in the *Odyssey* or in the book of *Genesis*. When Champlain and Frontenac met the feathered chieftains of the St. Lawrence, they talked with men of the stone age face to face. Phases of life that had vanished from Europe long before Rome was built survived in America long enough to be seen and studied by modern men. Behind Mr. Parkman's picturesqueness, therefore, there lies a significance far more profound than one at first would suspect. He has portrayed for us a wondrous and forever fascinating stage in the evolution of humanity. We may well thank Heaven for sending us such a scholar, such an artist, such a genius, before it was too late. As we look at the changes wrought in the last fifty years, we realize that already the opportunities by which he profited in youth are in large measure lost. He came not a moment too soon to catch the fleeting light and fix it upon his immortal canvas.

Thus Parkman is to be regarded as first of all the historian of primitive society. No other great historian has dealt intelligently and consecutively with such phases of barbarism as he describes with such loving minuteness. To the older historians, all races of men very far below the European grade of culture seemed alike; all were ignorantly grouped together as "savages." Mr. Lewis Morgan first showed the wide difference between true savages, like the Apaches and Bannocks on the one hand, and barbarians with developed village life, like the Five Nations and the Cherokees. The latter tribes, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, exhibited social phenomena such as were probably witnessed about the shores of the Mediterranean some seven thousand years earlier. If we carry our thoughts back to the time that saw the building of the Great Pyramid, and imagine civilized Egypt looking northward and eastward

upon tribes of white men with social and political ideas not much more advanced than those of Frontenac's red men, our picture will be in its most essential features a correct one. What would we not give for an historian who, with a pen like that of Herodotus, could bring before us the scenes of that primeval Greek world before the cyclopean works at Tiryns were built, when the ancestors of Solon and Aristides did not yet dwell in neatly joined houses and fasten their door-latches with a thong, when the sacred city-state was still unknown, and the countryman had not yet become a bucolic or "tender of cows," and butter and cheese were still in the future! No written records can ever take us back to that time in that place, for there as everywhere the art of writing came many ages later than the domestication of animals, and some ages later than the first building of towns. But in spite of the lack of written records, the comparative study of institutions, especially comparative jurisprudence, throws back upon those prehistoric times a light that is often dim, but sometimes wonderfully suggestive and instructive. It is a light that reveals among primeval Greeks ideas and customs essentially similar to those of the Iroquois. It is a light that grows steadier and brighter as it leads us to the conclusion that four or five thousand years before Christ white men around the Ægean Sea had advanced about as far as the red men in the Mohawk Valley two centuries ago. The one phase of this primitive society illuminates the other, though extreme caution is necessary in drawing our inferences. Now, Parkman's minute and vivid description of primitive society among red men is full of lessons that may be applied with profit to the study of pre-classic antiquity in the Old World. No other historian has brought us into such close and familiar contact with human life in such ancient stages of its progress. In Park-

man's great book we have a record of vanished conditions such as exists hardly anywhere else in all literature.

I say his "great book," using the singular number, for, with the exception of that breezy bit of autobiography, *The Oregon Trail*, all Parkman's books are the closely related volumes of a single comprehensive work. From the adventures of the Pioneers of France a consecutive story is developed through the Jesuits in North America and the Discovery of the Great West. In the *Old Régime in Canada* it is continued with a masterly analysis of French methods of colonization in this their greatest colony; and then from *Frontenac and New France under Louis XIV.* we are led through *A Half-Century of Conflict* to the grand climax in the volumes on *Montcalm and Wolfe*, after which *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* brings the long narrative to a noble and brilliant close. In the first volume we see the men of the stone age at that brief moment when they were disposed to adore the bearded new-comers as Children of the Sun; in the last we read the bloody story of their last and most desperate concerted effort to loosen the iron grasp with which these palefaces had seized and were holding the continent. It is a well-rounded tale, and as complete as anything in real history, where completeness and finality are things unknown. And between the beginning and end of this well-rounded tale a mighty drama is wrought out in all its scenes. The struggle between France and England for the soil of North America was one of the great critical moments in the career of mankind, — no less important than the struggle between Greece and Persia, or between Rome and Carthage. Out of the long and complicated interaction between Roman and Teutonic institutions which made up the history of the Middle Ages two strongly contrasted forms of political society had grown up, and acquired

aggressive strength, when, in the course of the sixteenth century, a New World beyond the sea was laid open for colonization. The maritime nations of Europe were, naturally, the ones to be attracted to this new arena of enterprise; and Spain, Portugal, France, England, and Holland each played its interesting and characteristic part. Spain at first claimed the whole, excepting only that Brazilian coast which Borgia's decree gave to Portugal. But Spain's methods, as well as her early failure of strength, prevented her from making good her claim. Spain's methods were limited to stepping into the place formerly occupied by the conquering races of half-civilized Indians. She made aboriginal tribes work for her, just as the Aztec Confederacy and the Inca dynasty had done. Where she was brought into direct contact with American barbarism, without the intermediation of half-civilized native races, she made little or no headway. Her early failure of strength, on the other hand, was due to her total absorption in the fight against civil and religious liberty in Europe. The failure became apparent as soon as the absorption had begun to be complete. Spain's last aggressive effort in the New World was the destruction of the little Huguenot colony in Florida, in 1565, and it is at that point that Parkman's great work appropriately begins. From that moment Spain simply beat her strength to pieces against the rocks of Netherland courage and resourcefulness. As for the Netherlands, their energies were so far absorbed in taking over and managing the great eastern empire of the Portuguese that their work in the New World was confined to seizing upon the most imperial geographical position, and planting a cosmopolitan colony there that, in the absence of adequate support, was sure to fall into the hands of one or the other of the competitors more actively engaged upon the scene.

The two competitors thus more ac-

tively engaged were France and England, and from an early period it was felt between the two to be a combat in which no quarter was to be given or accepted. These two strongly contrasted forms of political society had each its distinct ideal, and that ideal was to be made to prevail to the utter exclusion and destruction of the other. Probably the French felt this way somewhat earlier than the English; they felt it to be necessary to stamp out the English before the latter had more than realized the necessity of defending themselves against the French. For the type of political society represented by Louis XIV. was preëminently militant, as the English type was preëminently industrial. The aggressiveness of the former was more distinctly conscious of its own narrower aims, and was more deliberately set at work to attain them; while the English, on the other hand, rather drifted into a tremendous world fight without distinct consciousness of their purpose. Yet after the final issue had been joined, the refrain *Carthago delenda est* was heard from the English side, and it came fraught with impending doom from the lips of Pitt as in days of old from the lips of Cato.

The French idea, had it prevailed in the strife, would not have been capable of building up a pacific union of partially independent states, covering this vast continent from ocean to ocean. Within that rigid and rigorous bureaucratic system there was no room for spontaneous individuality, no room for local self-government, and no chance for a flexible federalism to grow up. A well-known phrase of Louis XIV. was "The state is myself." That phrase represented his ideal. It was approximately true in Old France, realized as far as sundry adverse conditions would allow. The *Grand Monarque* intended that in New France it should be absolutely true. Upon that fresh soil was to be built up a pure monarchy, without concession to

human weaknesses and limitations. It was a pet scheme of Louis XIV., and never did a philanthropic world-mender contemplate his grotesque phalanstery or pantarchy with greater pleasure than this master of kingcraft looked forward to the construction of a perfect Christian state in America.

The pages of our great historian are full of examples which prove that if the French idea failed of realization, and the state it founded was overwhelmed, it was not from any lack of lofty qualities in individual Frenchmen. In all the history of the American continent no names stand higher than some of the French names. For courage, for fortitude and high resolve, for sagacious leadership, statesmanlike wisdom, unswerving integrity, devoted loyalty, for all the qualities which make life heroic, we may learn lessons innumerable from the noble Frenchmen who throng in Mr. Parkman's pages. The difficulty was not in the individuals, but in the system; not in the units, but in the way they were put together. For while it is true — though many people do not know it — that by no imaginable artifice can you make a society that is better than the human units you put into it, it is also true that nothing is easier than to make a society that is worse than its units. So it was with the colony of New France.

Nowhere can we find a description of despotic government more careful and thoughtful, or more graphic and lifelike, than Parkman has given us in his volume on the Old Régime in Canada. Seldom, too, will one find a book fuller of political wisdom. The author never preaches like Carlyle, nor does he hurl huge generalizations at our heads like Buckle; he simply describes a state of society that has been. But I hardly need say that his description is not — like the Dryasdust descriptions we are sometimes asked to accept as history — a mere mass of pigments flung at random upon a canvas. It is a picture

painted with consummate art; and in this instance the art consists in so handling the relations of cause and effect as to make them speak for themselves. These pages are alive with political philosophy, and teem with object lessons of extraordinary value. It would be hard to point to any book where history more fully discharges her high function of gathering friendly lessons of caution from the errors of the past.

Of all the societies that have been composed of European men, probably none was ever so despotically organized as New France, unless it may have been the later Byzantine Empire, which it resembled in the minuteness of elaborate supervision over all the pettiest details of life. In Canada, the protective, paternal, socialistic, or nationalistic theory of government — it is the same old cloven hoof, under whatever specious name you introduce it — was more fully carried into operation than in any other community known to history, except ancient Peru. No room was left for individual initiative or enterprise. All undertakings were nationalized. Government looked after every man's interests in this world and the next: baptized and schooled him; married him and paid the bride's dowry; gave him a bounty with every child that was born to him; stocked his cupboard with garden seeds and compelled him to plant them; prescribed the size of his house, and the number of horses and cattle he might keep, and the exact percentages of profit he might be allowed to make, how his chimneys should be swept, how many servants he might employ, what theological doctrines he might believe, what sort of bread the bakers might bake, and where goods might be bought and how much might be paid for them; and if, in a society so well cared for, it were possible to find indigent persons, such paupers were duly relieved from a fund established by government. Unmitigated benevolence was the theory of Louis XIV.'s

Canadian colony, and heartless political economy had no place there. Nor was there any room for free-thinkers: when the king, after 1685, sent out word that no mercy must be shown to heretics, the governor, Denonville, with a pious ejaculation, replied that not so much as a single heretic could be found in all Canada.

Such was the community whose career our historian has delineated with perfect soundness of judgment and unrivaled wealth of knowledge. The fate of this nationalistic experiment, set on foot by one of the most absolute of monarchs, and fostered by one of the most devoted and powerful of religious organizations, is traced to the operation of causes inherent in its very nature. The hopeless paralysis, the woeful corruption, the intellectual and moral torpor, resulting from the suppression of individualism, are vividly portrayed; yet there is no discursive generalizing, and from moment to moment the development of the story proceeds from within itself. It is the whole national life of New France that is displayed before us. Historians of ordinary calibre exhibit their subject in fragments, or they show us some phases of life and neglect others. Some have no eyes save for events that are startling, such as battles and sieges, or decorative, such as coronations and court balls; others give abundant details of manners and customs; others have their attention absorbed by economics; others, again, feel such interest in the history of ideas as to lose sight of mere material incidents. Parkman, on the other hand, conceives and presents his subject as a whole. He forgets nothing, overlooks nothing; but whether it is a bloody battle, or a theological pamphlet, or an exploring journey through the forest, or a code for the discipline of nunneries, each event grows out of its context as a feature in the total development that is going on before our eyes. It is only the historian who is also phi-

losopher and artist who can thus deal in block with the great and complex life of a whole society. The requisite combination is realized only in certain rare and high types of mind, and there has been no more brilliant illustration of it than Parkman's volumes afford.

The struggle between the machine-like socialistic despotism of New France and the free and spontaneous political vitality of New England is one of the most instructive object lessons with which the experience of mankind has furnished us. The depth of its significance is equaled by the vastness of its consequences. Never did destiny preside over a more fateful contest; for it determined which kind of political seed should be sown all over the widest and richest political garden plot left untilled in the world. Free industrial England pitted against despotic militant France for the possession of an ancient continent reserved for this decisive struggle, and dragging into the conflict the belated barbarism of the stone age, — such is the wonderful theme which Parkman has treated. When the vividly contrasted modern ideas and personages are set

off against the romantic though lurid background of Indian life, the artistic effect becomes simply magnificent. Never has historian grappled with another such epic theme, save when Herodotus told the story of Greece and Persia, or when Gibbon's pages resounded with the solemn tread of marshaled hosts through a thousand years of change.

Thus great in his natural powers and great in the use he made of them, Parkman was no less great in his occasion and in his theme. Of all American historians he is the most deeply and peculiarly American, yet he is at the same time the broadest and most cosmopolitan. The book which depicts at once the social life of the stone age and the victory of the English political ideal over the ideal which France inherited from imperial Rome is a book for all mankind and for all time. The more adequately men's historic perspective gets adjusted, the greater will it seem. Strong in its individuality and like to nothing beside, it clearly belongs, I think, among the world's few masterpieces of the highest rank, along with the works of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Gibbon.

John Fiske.

THE ETHICAL PROBLEM OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

THE political instincts of the people of the United States have led them to seek the best possible system of public schools, and the supreme motive for the expenditure of the vast sums of money that have been voted with great willingness for their foundation and their continued support has been the education of the youth of the country for citizenship. The final test of all citizenship must be an ethical one; and especially is this true in a democracy where the stability of its life depends upon the character of its citizens. With this fact in view, it is perti-

nent to ask whether the public schools are fulfilling the mission for which they were founded.

There has been for some time an increasing interest in the moral aspect of the public school problem. One indication of this is seen in the appearance during the last two years of seven rather notable textbooks upon ethics, especially designed for schools of lower grade. The question that is now asked, however, does not find its answer in any reply given to the query raised as to the wisdom of publishing these books, for it seeks to go