

slower transition, still based on both. To both Soboul and Labrousse Mousnier replied that the classification by orders before the eighteenth century was no juridical mask but a social reality, which became an unreal and outmoded mask by the social revolution bringing in the class system which preceded the political Revolution. Perhaps a little more sociology might have persuaded all three that they were dealing with the familiar sociological distinction between class and status, between the objective economic stratification by size and source of income and the subjective stratification by rank, prestige and esteem which is the often belated or outmoded reflection of the first. But Mousnier's point remains, that different societies are, as far as their own conscious ordering of themselves is concerned, based on different principles of stratification, and if the historian treats them on another principle, imported from his own society, he misleads himself and fails to understand his subject. It is here that social history scores over sociology, in the extended experience of diverse societies different from his own which it offers to the scholar. What do they know of England who only England — or France, or Canada — know ?

Yet a reading of the proceedings of a conference of this kind, however successful, raises a wicked thought of how sociology may score over social history, or any other scholastic discipline. For every discipline, not to say the university profession itself, has its sociology. Indeed, a university "subject", viewed sociologically, is a group of interacting people with a determinate ordering of rank, prestige and influence. Viewed from the outside, as one inevitably views a foreign national group, however close the subject, one recognizes all the familiar types of academic personality and modes of behaviour : the arrogant dogmatism of the *doyens* of the profession, the competitive sycophancy of the middle ranks, the apologetic timidity of the juniors. For all their virtuosity and brilliance, the conceit and condescension of French academics towards their assumed inferiors has to be read to be believed. One need look little further for the causes of the recent student unrest in French universities.

HAROLD PERKIN,  
*University of Lancaster.*

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W. L. MORTON (ed.). *The Shield of Achilles : Aspects of Canada in the Victorian Age.* Toronto : McClelland and Stewart, 1968. 333 pp.

Professor Morton explains in his preface that the publication of this collection of thirteen essays was undertaken at the suggestion of one of the contributors, Mr. Lawrence S. Fallis, Jr. It might be expected therefore that Mr. Fallis' paper, which promises "a scholarly reconnaissance in force into the vast *terra incognita* of nineteenth-century Canadian thought", should set the

general tone of the book. This expectation is, unhappily, fulfilled. Both Mr. Fallis' "The Idea of Progress in the Province of Canada" and the book as a whole look promising, but are in fact distinctly disappointing.

Mr. Fallis purports to show that nineteenth century Canadians shared with their contemporaries elsewhere "a structure of ideas, opinions, beliefs and expectations which it is convenient to label the 'idea of progress'", an idea which was "at bottom", "a philosophy of history". The reader is unlikely to be convinced that Mr. Fallis has proven his case, which rests largely on the observation that Canadians were aware that their province was growing in over-all wealth, in population and in the advance of settlement. "The land that was once a wilderness had yielded its harvest of wheat and timber to the labour of the pioneer." Relying for the most part on selections from the mass of pamphlet literature produced in Canada in the nineteenth century, he succeeds in showing that Canadians were mostly optimistic about the future, that they believed they were making much material and some moral progress; but, the fulminations of a John Sheridan Hogan notwithstanding, he presents no real evidence that they assumed themselves to be a part of an inevitable, on-going, universal historical movement. Indeed, although Mr. Fallis finds "an almost total absence of a literature of pessimism" it is questionable whether any such belief was really justified. The period he has chosen for study (1840-1870) began with and was punctuated by periods of economic depression, with enough attendant failures of banks, railways and other businesses to provide an antidote to blind faith in endless progress. And if, as Mr. Fallis asserts, Canadians borrowed some of their assumptions about progress from the United States, they also during these years continued to compare themselves unfavourably with their more prosperous neighbours; and they had a further potent motive for refusing to abandon themselves entirely to "the idea of progress", the danger, to use a pregnant phrase of John A. Macdonald's, "that we might drift by degrees into the American system", a danger sufficient to give all but a few Canadians pause.

Mr. Fallis does believe that Canadians lived in fear of the United States but he believes this to have been a fear of military invasion, a fear so constant and so strong that it prompted Canadians to try to conceal their very presence on the continent. He provides no evidence to support this surprising view of an age in which (to cite only one area of Canadian-American relations) the "harvest of wheat and timber" depended, with or without Reciprocity, on a keen American interest in Canadian affairs.

Mr. Fallis' essay, which appears at the midway point in the book, the first essay, Professor French's "The Evangelical Creed in Canada", and the last, Professor Morton's "Victorian Canada", all take a "tentative" approach to their subjects. This, they tell us in effect, is what we shall likely find out when we have done the necessary research. Essays of this type are of course

often of much use, by pointing out areas of study which may prove fruitful; but would it not have been more useful actually to have done the research? To have examined in detail a manageable aspect of the age? This at any rate has been the method of most of the other authors of the book, and while the results obtained have not always been satisfactory, at least two essays are of exceptional quality: S. F. Wise's "God's Peculiar Peoples" and Philippe Sylvain's "Libéralisme et ultramontanisme au Canada français". Both Wise and Sylvain have used new source materials to much profit, both place their studies firmly in a world setting, both provide thoughtful and wholly fascinating glimpses of one type of clerical mind at work (and in Professor Sylvain's case of the anticlerical mind as well). Read separately, these two essays are evocative and absorbing; read together, they complement and illuminate each other. Mr. Wise is also, by a considerable margin, the most readable of the thirteen authors.

Professor Sylvain's long essay is one of three in the book published in French. The others are by two of his colleagues at Université Laval; and both of these explore unfamiliar topics with some success, though Pierre Savard has difficulty in making much of his subject, French immigration to Canada, of which there was so little, or of the influence on it of successive French Consuls, which appears to have been even less. On the other hand, Alexandre Vattemare, the subject of Claude Galarneau's brief paper, undoubtedly did, during his short stay in Canada in 1840-1841, exert an influence which helped to bring about a species of "Rapprochement des 'Races' et des Classes au Canada"; but one suspects that M. Galarneau, in wishing to do justice to Vattemare, does him a little more than justice. A real "rapprochement" was scarcely to be created so easily or in so brief a time.

Jacques Monet attempts to document another kind of "rapprochement", between French-Canadians of the 1840's and the British Crown, which he argues was created in large part by the actions of two of the first four governors of the Province of Canada. Professor Monet is an engaging writer, but his thesis is (at least) debatable, and his search for explanations for the success of his heroes, Bagot and Elgin, and for the failure of Sydenham and Metcalfe, leads him at times onto some questionable ground. Bagot and Elgin had initial advantages because they were "born aristocrats, descended from kings and knights whose names shine down through mediaeval mists". True enough for Elgin certainly, and Bagot came from an ancient family, but the actual Bagot peerage only went back sixty years to Sir Charles' grandfather. Sydenham and Metcalfe were sick. Was Bagot in rude health? Metcalfe was "trained to autocracy", yet his conduct in Jamaica, at a time, immediately after emancipation, when the difficulties of office were no less formidable than those in the Province of Canada, had been anything but autocratic. Sydenham and Metcalfe did not demonstrate "ability in French", yet Sydenham at least

was an accomplished linguist, fluent not only in French but in several other languages as well. These are perhaps minor quibbles, but they tend to create doubt about an argument which needs all the support it can get.

Among the other essays that of L. F. S. Upton is probably the most ambitious. He sets out to trace the development of "the idea of Confederation" and to explore its implications, from a starting point in 1754 to its materialization in 1867. His conclusion, that by 1858 British North Americans were not only familiar, but *over familiar* with the various confederation schemes, and that this familiarity produced a consensus which "froze" thinking about union at 1867, is open to considerable doubt. If Professor Upton is right it is hard to explain (for example) the *lack* of knowledge which caused Macdonald to complain frequently in private that almost none of his colleagues "had the slightest idea of constitution making". Professor Upton assumes that because so many proposals had been put forward they must have had a cumulative effect. He seems to assume also that an intellectual connecting line can be drawn through all these plans, which is clearly not the case. Professor Upton's paper contains a useful chronological checklist of plans for union but perhaps its real usefulness is as a warning: that attempts to find, in this or any other "intellectual" area of Canadian history, a body of coherent, connected, formal thought is apt to produce results which are partial, misleading and, very likely, dull.

Probably no one is going to quarrel very much with the findings of Anthony Rasporich, based on his examination of "Imperial Sentiment in the Province of Canada during the Crimean War", which amount to the fact that Canadian support was solidly on the British and French side. Still it is regrettable that he found it necessary to make his point at such unnecessary length and in such unnecessarily awkward prose. Jean Usher also takes a considerable time to make her point about William Duncan of Metlakatla (that his approach to native peoples did not represent any daring innovation in technique), a point which many Canadian historians may find somewhat peripheral to their work. Finally, the papers submitted by Alan Gowans and R. H. Hubbard, which do possess the merit of brevity, are otherwise undistinguished. Both begin well but Dr. Hubbard's "Viceregal Influences on Canadian Society" lapses rapidly into mere anecdote; and Professor Gowans, having put forward his intriguing thesis — that High Victorian architecture perfectly expressed the Canadian cultural climate of the 1860's and 1870's — perversely refuses to explain why he thinks this is so, on the ground that it is all in his books.

Professor Morton, whose contribution to the book is twofold, is more successful as essayist than as editor. "Victorian Canada" is obviously a subject too large for the twenty pages he has allowed himself, and his essay becomes rather breathless simply in trying to touch on all the topics raised by

his collaborators. He does at times, however, evoke social pictures which have the feel of authenticity. He sets down as well a whole range of concepts which he sees as the dominant ideas of the Victorian Age, all of which are provocative, all worth study in real depth, worth refining and qualifying and thinking about until we really do "begin to see what past Canadians really thought and were".

Except for the initial task of soliciting contributions to the book, the only discernible sign that Professor Morton has "edited" it at all is the annoying division of Professor Sylvain's essay into two parts. More guidance was clearly called for. A number of the essays might have been severely criticized on historical, literary and logical grounds and returned to their authors for rewriting and re-thinking, before publication. Less serious but no less irritating is the extraordinary number of factual, grammatical and typographical errors which abound in the book. Even if Professor Morton's editorial duties did not include elementary proofreading for typist's and printer's errors (they obviously did not since his own essay is the worst offender in this respect), he ought to have forestalled a number of howlers of the undergraduate sort, including the invention of some historical figures previously unknown to students of Canadian biography, such as Professor Upton's composite Earl Grey "who accompanied his father-in-law, Lord Durham in 1838", "Sir" Alexander Mackenzie (the Prime Minister) gratuitously knighted by Dr. Hubbard, and Professor Morton's own contribution to the ranks of the *petite noblesse*, the Knight of Labour. The book, in sum, appears to have been put together carelessly and in haste.

An editor's lot is frequently not a happy one. Anyone who has attempted a similar task will sympathize with Professor Morton's statement that "it was necessary to proceed with such authors as had time to prepare a contribution". Yet one cannot help wondering if something of more value might not have been possible given more time and more care. Clearly, we are not going to find out what we "really thought and were" quickly or easily, but only by long and patient sifting of many kinds of evidence. With some exceptions, this sort of careful, thoughtful work is not apparent in *The Shield of Achilles*. One can only hope that this book is not an accurate reflection of the present level of studies in the intellectual and social history of Canada. One can only hope, to borrow a last inelegant phrase from one of the book's authors, that "nothing could be more farther from the truth".

J. K. JOHNSON,  
Carleton University.