

the soil was, however, greatly neglected for the seductive fur trade, which possessed for the adventurous *voyageur* and *coureur des bois* a fascination that even its enormous profits did not wholly explain.

In 1744 the war of the Austrian succession once more involved the Colonies in hostilities, which were chiefly remarkable for the capture of Louisbourg. The war terminated between the principals with the Treaty of Aix la-Chapelle (1748), but this truce was regarded by both nations as only a breathing spell to prepare for the coming struggle that would decide the possession of the continent.

In 1754 the expected conflict opened with a brush between a small body of troopers under Washington and a party of French soldiers under Jumonville, at Fort Duquesne. Washington took the initiative and, as Bancroft says, his command to fire "kindled the world into a flame." It precipitated the tremendous struggle which, fought out to the bitter end on the plains of India, on the waters of the Mediterranean and the Spanish main, on the gold coasts of Africa, on the ramparts of Louisbourg, on the heights of Quebec and in the Valley of the Ohio, resulted in the defeat of the French and the destruction of their sovereignty on the American Continent, and prepared the way for the foundation of the unique Empire which, unlike Russia and the United States, "equally vast but not continuous, with the ocean flowing through it in every direction, lies, like a world-Venice, with the sea for streets—Greater Britain."

6. The era of the French regime in Canada lasted till 1760, when France gave up the contest with England for supremacy on the American Continent, and New France with its population of 70,000 became the Canada whose progress is set forth in the pages following.

7. In 1774 what was known as the "Quebec Act" was passed by the British Parliament. It extended the bounds of the Province from Labrador to the Mississippi, and from the Ohio to the water-shed of Hudson Bay. It established the right of the French to the observance of the Roman Catholic religion without civil disability, and confirmed the tithes to the clergy. It restored the French civil code and established the English administration of law in criminal cases. This Act continued to be the rule of government of the province for seventeen years.

8. Soon after the passing of the Quebec Act the "War of Independence" began, one of the first steps taken by the secessionists being to capture Ticonderoga and Crown Point on Lake Champlain. Other forts along the gateway followed, and on the 12th November, 1775, Montreal, then having a population of 10,000, succumbed; but the tide turned when, flushed with their first success, the Americans essayed the capture of Quebec, two daring attempts resulting in disastrous failure.

9. By the terms of the treaty of peace signed at Paris, September 3rd, 1783, Canada lost the region lying between the Mississippi and the Ohio, and was divided from its southern neighbour by the great lakes, the St. Lawrence, the 49th parallel of north latitude and the highlands dividing the waters falling into the Atlantic from those emptying themselves into the St. Lawrence and the St. Croix Rivers.