

FRANCES BROOKE'S CHEQUERED GARDENS

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TWO-THIRDS OF THE WAY through Voltaire's *Candide*, the naïve Candide and his cynical but ostensibly realistic companion Martin learn about the Parisian stage from

a little abbé from Périgord, one of those eager people, always alert, always obliging, brazen, fawning, complaisant, who lie in wait for strangers passing through, tell them the history of the town's scandals, and offer them pleasures at any price. . . .

"Sir, how many plays do you have in France?" said Candide to the abbé, who replied: "Five or six thousand."

"That's a lot," said Candide. "How many of them are good?"

"Fifteen or sixteen," replied the other.

"That's a lot," said Martin.

The sardonic view of literary values ought frequently to restrain our enthusiasms more than it does, and force us to temper mercy with a little justice when we set out to assess a work. Deciding what criteria to use in the process, however, is even more of a problem than agreeing that assessment is necessary in the first place. It is a problem that is particularly difficult with a provincial literature, where the temptation to extol regional fidelity and verbal felicity as automatic indications of profound talent is matched only by the insistence on a work's "historical importance" — a convenient escape from the harsh judgments one might otherwise have to make. In Canada, the latter approach has the fortuitous by-product of providing us with the history we seem to be constantly in search of and thus offering glimpses of the national attitudes we have since — perhaps unconsciously — come to accept. To re-examine Frances Brooke's *The History of Emily*

Montague (the "first" Canadian novel, dated 1769) is not only to catch at some of those attitudes but also to look at the way they are presented, to grapple with the potentially disparate scenes, events, and characters, and with the words themselves, in order to comprehend the effect that, taken together, they can exert.

As Voltaire's character Martin should remind us, being the "first" of a kind is not a literary virtue, and Mrs. Brooke's epistolary novel suffers from a certain repetitiveness of style and event that no amount of exegesis can excuse. We are told so often how "lively" and "tender" things are that the adjectives lose their meaning, for example, and the characters of Emily Montague herself, and of her patient wooer Ed Rivers, are so pallid and priggish as to be almost indistinguishable. Yet they, like the other characters — Emily's long-lost father Col. Wilmott, her friend Bell Fermor, Bell's father and *her* erratic suitor Fitzgerald; Ed's sister Lucy and his rakish friend Jack Temple; Sir George Clayton (Emily's unacceptable fiancé) and Ed's enigmatic Canadian confidante, Mme. des Roches — fit into a definite pattern in which some repetition is good. The three sets of lovers, with two threats to happiness and two parents, are arranged with a neat sense of balance that follows faithfully the eighteenth century taste for symmetry. As Carl Klinck points out in his introduction to the New Canadian Library edition of the novel, it also displays the aphoristic wit and the analysis of sentiment that make it characteristic of its time, and it is, in other words, an English book.

To what extent it is Canadian, too, then, is a moot point. But if we look further we see that though the pattern is English, much of the energy in the book derives from the author's contact with Quebec during the period 1763-1768, and that, as a result, there is a tension established between nature and society that is never wholly resolved. On the surface Quebec is simply an exotic setting for an English comedy of manners, which Lionel Stevenson dismisses in a left-handed compliment as being quaint, and which B. G. McCarthy values because scenic description, up to this point, had been rare in English fiction. Both estimates seem to me to miss the point: that the setting, with all its resonances, is built into the book's use of imagery, therefore attached to the structure, and therefore used deliberately to establish the tension through which the author conveys her ideas. For as one ought to expect from a character as forceful as Mrs. Brooke appears in the Murray Papers to have been, she does have ideas, and her novel is no mere sentimental exercise. Drawing some of her characters' expectations from the fashionable ideas of Pope and Rousseau, she (and her mouthpiece Bell Fermor) are more at home in the brittle ironies of Voltaire's *Candide*, which they cannot resolve and so must instead contend with as knowledgeably as they can. That

Mrs. Brooke's knowledge also allows her to take *Candide* subtly to task would probably be an added irony for the coterie in which she moved.

Voltaire's satire, published in 1759, would be readily available to Frances Brooke, who read French fluently, and she would no doubt respond to the view of the Seven Years' War that he expresses in it. At the beginning of Chapter 23, Candide and his friend are aboard a ship in the English channel:

"You know England; are they as mad there as in France?"

"It's another kind of madness," said Martin. "You know that these two nations are at war over a few acres of snow out around Canada, and that they are spending on that war much more than all of Canada is worth."

The image stuck in the European imagination, and *quelques arpents de neige* (glossed up with the occasional trapper, Mountie, or coureur-de-bois) is what Canada has been ever since. For Mrs. Brooke's characters, actually experiencing the Canadian winter, however, the snow is only a partial truth. Their descriptions of climate and scenery form part of the author's distinction between illusion and reality and thus (while giving the novel all the flavour of the *Commonplace Book*) contribute to its dramatic conflict between the natural wilderness and civilization.

When Ed Rivers comes to Canada, he does so on half-pay with the anticipation of running an estate larger than any he might acquire in England. Sir George comes as a "civil but cold" social butterfly, directed by his mother as to the time he shall marry Emily. Emily is with chaperones at Montreal, Arabella with her father on a farm at Sillery (attached to the garrison), Fitzgerald is in the army, and Mme. des Roches, being Canadian and having land to sell to Ed, lives alone "in the wildest country on earth". The differences between England and Canada start to multiply; observed initially in the surface landscape, they are extended rapidly into social customs and, aphorism by aphorism, into the intellectual distinctions between romantic North America and ordered Augustan England. Ed's initial reaction to the country displays something of this:

My subjects indeed at present will be only bears and elks, but in time I hope to see the *human face divine* multiplying around me; and, in thus cultivating what is in the rudest state of nature, I shall taste one of the greatest of all pleasures, that of creation, and see order and beauty gradually rise from chaos.

When he adds shortly, "one grows tired of meer scenery", the author advises us almost directly that his attachment to the country — and by extension to the

aptly-named Mme. des Roches — will be short-lived. His own name, Rivers, suggests the paradox of his stance; he seems part of the scenery, after all. But when Arabella's father later writes a descriptive commentary of the breakup of ice on the St. Lawrence, he indirectly clarifies Ed's relationship with Canada. Frances Brooke uses the imagery to tie landscape with character once more. William Fermor had anticipated, he says, that the break-up would be unexceptional, a melting by degree that would go largely unnoticed: "But I found *the great river*, as the savages with much propriety call it, maintain its dignity . . . and assert its superiority over those petty streams which we honour with the names of rivers in England." The neat distinction is one which only Bell really appreciates.

She, too, arrives with certain built-in expectations and prejudices, and as the coquette with the literary name she epitomizes many of the socially acceptable attitudes of her day. Behind her prejudices lies an independence of judgment, however, and behind her flirtatiousness a cool and reasoned assessment of the people she meets. When, after being in Canada, she changes her mind about it, it is that apprehension we should therefore try to gauge. As Bell is by far the liveliest character in the book anyway, the style inevitably focusses attention on her rather than on Ed or Emily, but this seems to be part of the author's intent. Convention will solve all discord for Emily, while Bell is more shrewd; the Nature that she recognizes in Canada forces her to re-examine the conventions she starts with. When we first hear from Bell, that is, she is describing Chaudière Rapids and Montmorenci Falls in conventional terms, which she employs with fluent energy and apparent easiness of mind:

The former [speaking of Chaudière] is a prodigious sheet of water, rushing over the wildest rocks, and forming a scene grotesque, irregular, astonishing: the latter, less wild, less irregular, but more pleasing and more majestic, falls from an immense height, down the side of a romantic mountain, into the river St. Lawrence, opposite the most smiling part of the island of Orleans, to the cultivated charms of which it forms the most striking and agreeable contrast.

The important distinction here is that between irregularity and contrast. Contrast, by implying balance, fits into the conventional scheme of things and into Bell's scale of values, whereas an irregular landscape, being unpredictable, is at this stage unacceptable. As Bell herself admits, the conventional plan of the natural environment is "a little world of enchantment". It is one which in Canada the forcible realities of winter will soon alter.

To demonstrate her developing change of attitude, Frances Brooke then makes

Bell write several letters over the winter to Lucy Rivers, which seem at first simply to describe the weather and the land. The notations about the very cold temperatures and the freezing of the river are those of the acute observer, but gradually, by a sardonic competition between herself and the beavers as to who is the better judge of the climate, Bell comes to participate in the Nature that to this point she has only described. As long as she separates herself from Canada, it is merely "one undistinguishable waste of snow"; she is one then with Voltaire in the English Channel, judging from afar with trenchant fancy. But such division from the local landscape, as she finds out, does not mean she can retain the old conventions with comfort. The freezing of the river forces her to recognize the intellectual as well as the physical distance she has come. In November she writes:

I have been seeing the last ship go out of the port, Lucy; you have no notion what a melancholy sight it is: we are now left to ourselves, and shut up from all the world for the winter. . . .

Another note is introduced only when she reveals that being cut off from England does not mean being cut off from the landscape; she enjoys the carriage trips, which "fly along at the rate of twenty miles an hour", and late in February she confirms her change of mind. Returning to Montmorenci to view the Sugar Loaf and the partly frozen falls, she writes:

Those who have heard no more of a Canadian winter than what regards the intenseness of its cold, must suppose it a very joyless season; 'tis, I assure you, quite otherwise. . . .

The river ice that she thought severed her from beauty turns out to create its own kind, and she adds, "all together give a grandeur and variety to the scene, which almost rise to enchantment." But not quite. This time the scene stops short in the reality of the cold, which must be acknowledged and met. The new world can then be appreciated.

The difference in attitude that close acquaintance brings demands an appropriate change in action as well. In February Emily breaks off her engagement to Sir George Clayton (of which Bell has never approved), distinguishing civil coldness from the natural kind. And when in April Bell has heard from England that Lucy and Jack Temple have married, she writes with characteristic posturing:

Our beaux are terribly at a loss for similes: you have lillies of the valley for comparisons; we nothing but what with the idea of whiteness gives that of coldness too.

Underlying her whimsy is her new knowledge. She is as unsatisfied with conventional relationships among people as with conventional attitudes to the wilderness. The whole complex of ideas related to the landscape image is thus tied to love, or, looked at from another angle, the love story which provides the simple plot for the book can be seen as a vehicle to allow the author to explore her ideas about nature and society.

PARALLELING THE REASSESSMENT of climate and landscape, the novel's examination of the "Noble Savage" concept also relates to the theme of love. Once again the conventional attitudes are put into the mouth of Ed Rivers:

If the Epicurean definition of happiness is just that it consists in indolence of body and tranquility of mind, the Indians of both sexes are the happiest people on earth; free from all care, they enjoy the present moment, forget the past, and are without solicitude for the future: in summer, stretch'd on the verdant turf, they sing, they laugh, they play, they relate stories of their ancient heroes to warm the youth to war; in winter, wrap'd in the furs which bounteous nature provides them, they dance, they feast, and despise the rigours of the season, at which the more effeminate Europeans tremble. . . .

Later, observing that the almost exterminated Hurons preserve their independence inside the European colony, he affirms of what he calls "his" savages: "other nations talk of liberty, they possess it". He quotes an Indian as saying "we are subjects to no prince; a savage is free all over the world" , and he adds:

He spoke only truth; they are not only free as a people, but every individual is perfectly so. Lord of himself, at once subject and master, a savage knows no superior . . . ; 'tis the species, 'tis man, 'tis his equal he respects, without regarding the gaudy trappings, the accidental advantages, to which polished nations pay homage.

The distinction between the European system and the local one rests on the question of social status, the latent irony of the observation appearing when we place Ed's apparent respect of the classless society beside his motives and actions in the sphere of love. We have learned already not to expect either logic or depth from Ed — he grows tired of "meer scenery" — and true to form, when he is faced with the prospect of marrying Emily, he momentarily backs away, finding it impossible to marry her either in Canada, where he will have an estate but be

exiled, or in England, where he will have too small an estate to be permanently at leisure. His consciousness of class is built firmly into his sense of acceptable position, and his taste for classlessness seems in that context the casual whim of the uninvolved aristocrat rather than the zealous intent of the revolutionary.

His view is one which finds its analogue in Pope's *Essay on Man*, published over thirty years earlier. In the first epistle of that poem, Pope chides the proud, who presume to judge God and censure Nature, and in a passage of remarkable condescension contemplates the lot of the noble savage:

Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutored mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
His soul, proud Science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk, or milky way;
Yet simple Nature to his hope has given,
Behind the cloud-topped hill, an humbler heaven;
Some safer world in depth of woods embraced,
Some happier island in the watery waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.
To Be, contents his natural desire,
He asks no Angel's wing, no Seraph's fire;
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company.

The conclusion of the epistle affirms with absolute certainty:

All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee;
All Chance, Direction, which thou canst not see;
All Discord, Harmony not understood;
All partial Evil, universal Good:
And, spite of Pride, in erring Reason's spite,
One truth is clear, **WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT.**

And indeed, in the pleasure they take in order, balance, symmetry and decorum, Ed and Emily — and even Arabella, at first — accept that solution implicitly.

Bell's response is, admittedly, tinged with an intentional irony Ed is incapable of, as when she writes to Emily:

I believe I shall set about writing a system of ethics myself . . . rural, refined, and sentimental; rural by all means; for who does not know that virtue is a country gentlewoman? all the good mammas will tell you, there is no such being to be heard of in town.

But she is wholly genuine in her first estimation of the noble life of Indian women. Ed had written somewhat ponderously that

The sex we have so unjustly excluded from power in Europe have a great share in the Huron government . . . In the true sense of the word, *we* are the savages, who so impolitely deprive you of the common rights of citizenship, and leave you no power but . . . the resistless power of your charms.

Bell's reaction is lighter but equally admiring:

Absolutely, Lucy, I will marry a savage, and turn squaw . . . : never was any thing delightful as their lives; they talk of French husbands, but commend me to an Indian one, who lets his wife ramble five hundred miles, without asking where she is going.

In short order the illusion is overturned and an even more vigorous letter is sent off to Lucy Rivers:

I declare off at once; I will not be a squaw; I admire their talking of the liberty of savages; in the most essential point they are slaves: the mothers marry their children without ever consulting their inclinations, and they are obliged to submit to this foolish tyranny. Dear England! where liberty appears, not as here among these odious savages, wild and ferocious like themselves, led by the hand of the Graces. There is no true freedom anywhere else. They may talk of the privilege of chusing a chief; but what is that to the dear English privilege of chusing a husband?

That last utterance becomes structurally ironic when Frances Brooke develops the relationship between Emily and Sir George, for the privilege of English freedom is inherently denied by the loveless arrangement of marriage and by the set of social rules that makes it so uncomfortable for the arrangement to be changed. The question of freedom rapidly also acquires political overtones, especially in a novel concerning the English garrison in Quebec in the 1760's, and when Bell says "I think no politics worth attending to but those of the little commonwealth of woman", her words, rather than deny the issue, simply extend its force into a still larger sphere.

The independence of the Huron in the colony, in other words, is matched by the independence of the "Canadian" (a word reserved in this book entirely for the French community), and thus begin a number of parallels between the savages and the colonials, both of whom are closer to nature and so supposedly closer to virtue than the civilized British — which does not prevent the civilized

British, of course, from judging themselves still superior. Ed Rivers, writing from Montreal early on in the story, announces with a nice sense of contrast:

The peasants are ignorant, lazy, dirty, and stupid beyond all belief; but hospitable, courteous, civil; and, what is particularly agreeable, they leave their wives and daughters to do the honours of the house: in which obliging office they acquit themselves with an attention, which . . . must please every guest who has a soul inclin'd to be pleas'd. . . . Their conversation is lively and amusing; all the little knowledge of Canada is confined to the sex. . . .

The power of women in politics and love is thus reaffirmed in yet another quarter; furthermore, the ascription of knowledge only to the women underlines the importance of Arabella's viewpoint to the book and the importance that Frances Brooke attaches to intellectual as well as domestic freedom. The implicit and explicit attacks on Catholicism — and on the unnaturalness of the nunnery — combine the issues of women's freedom and moral virtue, and through the tacit suggestion that locking "knowledge" away in the convent may both weaken the colony and put power in a dangerous place, they reach into politics as well. William Fermor's interpretive commentary takes up the point again with Protestant astringency:

there is a striking resemblance between the manners of the Canadians and the savages. . . .

From all that I have observed, and heard of these people, it appears to me an undoubted fact, that the most civilized Indian nations are the most virtuous; a fact which makes directly against Rousseau's ideal system.

Indeed all systems make against, instead of leading to, the discovery of truth. . . .

That the savages have virtues, candour must own; but only a love of paradox can make any man assert they have more than polished nations. . . .

the Canadians . . . are simple and hospitable, yet extremely attentive to interest, where it does not interfere with that laziness which is their governing passion.

They are rather devout than virtuous; have religion without morality, and a sense of honour without very strict honesty.

Indeed I believe wherever superstition reigns, the moral sense is greatly weakened; the strongest inducement to the practice of morality is removed, when people are brought to believe that a few outward ceremonies will compensate for the want of virtue.

His point is strictly the religious one. Mrs. Brooke's goes further, for in jousting with ceremony she is taking on the whole social acceptance of symmetry and

decorous balance to see if it proves acceptable. It does not. Pope and Rousseau do not. The noble savage is not noblest when most savage, and as Rousseau's *Emile* (1762) suggests, it is difficult to know whether education should serve to make the learner more natural or more civilized.

Bell, committed to neither of these positions in exclusion of the other, rejects not the nature of the savage Canadians but their want of sensibility.

If my ideas of things are right, the human mind is naturally virtuous; the business of education is therefore less to give us good impressions, which we have from nature, than to guard us against bad ones, which are generally acquired.

No society exists in a state of nature, in other words; all are civilized in their way. The difference lies in the degree of freedom accorded to individuals and the sympathetic understanding they in turn have of their environment. Fitzgerald, whom Bell finally marries, echoes his wife's observation:

Nothing can be more false than that we are naturally inclined to evil: we are indeed naturally inclined to gratify the selfish passions of every kind; but those passions are not evil in themselves, they only become so from excess.

The malevolent passions are not inherent in our nature. They are only to be acquired by degrees, and generally are born from chagrin and disappointment. . . .

Having thus confirmed Bell's respectable independence, Frances Brooke goes on to probe the solutions that Ed and Emily arrive at, to examine the implications of their marriage, the fortuitous and dramatically artificial appearance of Emily's wealthy father, and their subsequent comfortable settlement in the English countryside. In so doing she approaches the intellectual climax of her book.

EMILY AND ED, installed in their country estate, have different responses to it, but in neither case are they the responses that would have been possible in Canada. The landscape image is revived, and the English garden serves as a balanced contrast to the savage wilderness. In that garden, Emily even contrives to recapitulate the contrast by constructing wild areas. The balance she seeks and the self-congratulatory eminence Ed acquires display all the attributes of Pope's Augustan Man:

Emily is planning a thousand embellishments for the garden, and will next year make it a wilderness of sweets, a paradise worthy its lovely inhabitant: she is already forming walks and flowery arbours in the wood, and giving the whole scene every charm which taste, at little expence, can bestow.

I, on my side, am selecting spots for plantations of trees; and mean, like a good citizen, to serve at once myself and the public, by raising oaks, which may hereafter bear the British thunder to distant lands.

I believe we country gentlemen, whilst we have spirit to keep ourselves independent, are the best citizens, as well as subjects, in the world. . . .

In short, and I am sure you will here be of my opinion, the man who has competence, virtue, true liberty, and the woman he loves, will cheerfully obey the laws which secure him these blessings, and the prince under whose mild sway he enjoys them.

All is for the best, in other words, in the best of all possible worlds. But Ed Rivers notwithstanding, neither Voltaire nor Mrs. Brooke nor the chastened *Candide* are so sure. Says Voltaire's philosopher Pangloss to his former pupil:

"All events are linked together in the best of all possible worlds; for after all, if you had not been expelled from a fine castle with great kicks in the backside . . . , if you had not been subjected to the Inquisition, if you had not traveled about America on foot, if you had not given the Baron a great blow with your sword, if you had not lost all your sheep from the good country of Eldorado, you would not be here eating candied citrons and pistachios."

"That is well said," replied *Candide*, "but we must cultivate our garden."

And at the end of *The History of Emily Montague*, Ed, pontificating as usual to Bell, suddenly interrupts his letter to anticipate the reply she would undoubtedly give him: "'Cela est bien dit, mon cher Rivers; mais il faut cultiver notre jardin.' You are right, my dear Bell, and I am a prating coxcomb." Which is true, despite his own (and even Arabella's) earlier statement to the contrary. The sudden intrusion of reality into the flow of his words works reflexively to illuminate the rest of the book; the direct quotation from *Candide* throws perspective from the resolvable upsets of the mannered romance to the continuing tensions of irony. Though Ed's final words suggest equanimity — "I hope . . . to have nothing to wish, but a continuance of our present happiness" they cannot, in the light of the author's obvious warnings to the contrary, be accepted as a sign of permanent peace.

Through Ed's glimpse of himself we are advised back to the end of Pope's *Essay on Man*:

For Wit's false mirror held up Nature's light;
 Showed erring Pride, WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT;
 That REASON, PASSION, answer one great aim;
 That true SELF-LOVE and SOCIAL are the same;

That VIRTUE only makes our Bliss below;
And all our KNOWLEDGE is, OURSELVES TO KNOW.

It is not a doctrine that Frances Brooke accepts without a thousand qualifiers; wit's mirror in her book reveals the pretentiousness of much English "cultivation" and the need to recognize reality. Ed's English garden of trees is certainly co-existent self-and social-love in his mind, but if his love of self is confounded by his not accurately recognizing his identity, is the society not ill-served? Are his trees and Emily's artificial wilderness a true cultivation of Candide's human garden? Their estate at the end is called Bellfield, which suggests at once the possibility of acuteness and energy (possessing Bell's name as it does) and the enervating factitiousness of not actually being Bell. For it is she who throughout the book cultivates her landscape and she who recognizes Canada for what it was — a wilderness garden with its own pleasures, its own advantages, its own prospect of danger and development, not a simple balance to cultivated civilization, nor a few acres of snow to be summarily dismissed. In Canada, Ed says, "contrary to what we see every where else, the country is rich, the capital poor; the hills fruitful, the vallies barren." Bell, garnering information around her too, adds:

You will judge how naturally rich the soil must be, to produce good crops without manure, and without ever lying fallow, and almost without ploughing; yet our political writers in England never speak of Canada without the epithet *barren*. They tell me this extreme fertility is owing to the snow. . . .

Don't you think I am become an excellent farmeress? 'Tis intuition; some people are born learned: are you not all astonishment at my knowledge? I never was so vain of a letter in my life.

The tone is characteristically flippant, but given its eighteenth century pronunciation ("farmer") her name indeed is *Arabella Fermor*, which contains enough punning to be suitably witty and enough literary association to be seriously ironic. There may, for the independent feminist author, be another irony implicit in the fact that Bell gives up that name on her return to England and her marriage to Fitzgerald. In any event, Ed points out that

Tame, cold, dispassionate minds resemble barren lands; warm, animated ones, rich ground, which, if properly cultivated, yields the noblest fruit; but, if neglected, from its luxuriance is most productive of weeds.

It seems at first simply to distinguish himself from Sir George Clayton. But the energetic realities that demand cultivation are to be found in Canada. In Eng-

land Bell is afraid above all else of "sinking into vegetation", and it is only Ed, relying on his father-in-law's money to allow them to follow inclination rather than rule, who contradicts her. He is a gentleman farmer there as he had hoped to be in Canada, but by being the gentleman foremost he always stops short of the real thing. As usual, it is Bell whom we should trust.

FRANCES BROOKE makes her point clear by drawing attention in a number of the closing letters to a symbolic gathering of the main characters. Emily and Ed hold a masquerade, at which Lucy goes as a sultana and Emily, following Ed's choice of costume, dresses up as a French *paisanne*. Bell, significantly, does not attend. In other words, the others in happily accepting the life they are living as the best of all possible worlds are living with masks across their eyes, while Bell, living in the same community, remains conscious of the rigours they choose to ignore. As Ed is the imitation farmer, Emily is the imitation peasant girl; they have the appearance without the reality and the rural state with none of its inconveniences. Bell's knowledge leads in another direction. Quoting Montesquieu, she approves his admiration of the amiability of surprise: "*Magnificent habits have seldom grace, which the dresses of shepherdesses often have.*" It is what appeals to Ed on his first arriving in Montreal, in fact:

I am arriv'd, and have brought my heart safe thro' a continued fire as never poor knight errant was exposed to; waited on at every stage by blooming country girls, full of spirit and coquetry, without any of the village bashfulness of England, and dressed like the shepherdesses of romance.

But the Canadian is real. By later turning Emily into the same mould, he contrives a wilderness that he will never be forced to fight. Knowing the wilderness to remain uncontrolled outside such a balance, Mrs. Brooke recognizes that the "best of all possible worlds" that rests on a masquerade must itself be a fiction. To recognize that, however, is to enter a kind of disorder, where resolutions seem arbitrary and ironic, and where only irony itself seems a legitimate response to man's estate.

From a vantage point two centuries later, it is possible to see the latter years of the Age of Johnson as an ideal breeding-ground for such a disposition. The revolution of the Common Man was in the offing, and the Great Democracies were shortly to spread their culture around the world. Still, it is not possible to assert that *The History of Emily Montague* exerted any direct influence whatsoever on

the revolutionary movement or on the course of literature in either England or Canada. (Even Fanny Burney's *Evelina* [1778] looked back to Richardson for its model, and the epistolary form was soon absorbed into other structures.) But it is indicative of the tension of the times. In his impressive book on the relationship between art and ideas between 1768 and 1850, *European Vision and the South Pacific*, Bernard Smith shows how the conflict resulted largely because of the opposing pulls of neo-classic order and scientific empiricism:

In the year 1768 the Royal Academy was established and the Royal Society promoted Cook's first voyage to the South Seas. The two events fittingly represent two influential attitudes to nature current in English eighteenth-century thought. The formation of the Academy constituted the official recognition in England of those neo-classical theories of Italian origin which had been transmitted to Britain through French theorists like de Chambray and de Piles. Nature, it was said, was to be rendered by the artist not with her imperfections clinging to her but in her perfect forms; what those perfect forms were the artist could only learn by a close study of the masterpieces of the ancients and their Renaissance disciples. The Royal Society, on the other hand, approached nature in a different way, appealing to travellers, virtuosi, and scientists to observe carefully, record accurately, and to experiment.

He goes on to examine in detail the shift from the Arcadian view of the South Pacific to the empirical one, and to note how the triumph of descriptive realism meant the death of paradise.

The relationship between these observations and Mrs. Brooke's Quebec is quite clear. Ed and Emily are the Arcadian pair, and when Emily seems irrevocably doomed to Sir George Clayton, Ed wanders "about like the first man when driven out of paradise". Contrarily, when he has hopes of winning her, he writes:

I already fancy my own settlement advancing in beauty: I paint to myself my Emily adorning those lovely shades: I see her, like the mother of mankind, admiring a new creation which smiles around her: we appear, to my idea, like the first pair in paradise.

It is a world he finds only in England's pretty ordered gardens and miniature woods and streams, or what he calls "enamelled meadows" and "every elegant art". Here, as anywhere, it depends for its existence on universal acceptance of the same convention, and if the company changes, so does the world. Bell is the last to leave Canada, and even she is by then happy to return to the English garden, but she accepts Arcadia as basically ephemeral:

Not but this is a divine country, and our farm a terrestrial paradise; but we have lived in it almost a year, and one grows tired of every thing in time, you know. . . . When, then, she feels a regret she had not anticipated at having to leave not only the scenes of remembered pleasure but the scenes themselves, it is only her jaunty tone which prevents her attribution of naiads to the falls of Montmorenci from seeming like a break in character. They are part of her guise as coquette, which she wears as the occasion demands and always recognizes for what it is. Behind it is the strong sense of change and empirical truth which forces her into her ironic role and gives the novel its increased dimension.

It is not that Canada for some geographic reason could not support indigenous nymphs, swains, satyrs, and the like, but that, by the time the English came to settle Canada, the European vision was largely unwilling to invest it with any. If it did, it did so with little conviction, and as a result the books we remember from nineteenth-century Canadian literature are the diaries, travel journals, emigrant guides, scientific commentaries, and exact descriptions of the life actually being encountered in the new land. Paradise does not last long in such an environment, and in fact the tension implicit in the two meanings of the word *cultivation* — mannered elegance vs. rigorous tillage — lies not only at the heart of *The History of Emily Montague* but also, because of historical accident rather than direct influence, at the heart of Canadian literature as a whole. As Douglas Jones has pointed out in *Butterfly on Rock*, the pervading myth of Canadian writing has not been one of finding Eden but of accommodating oneself to the expulsion. As Sandra Djwa has added in her computer analysis of Roberts and Pratt, the dominant source of their imagery is Darwinian theory. What this adds up to is an attempt to combat the equivocal tension that Frances Brooke exposed, to gather knowledge about the land in order to meet the land — and frequently for the sake of the knowledge itself. For the equivocation has never entirely disappeared. The preoccupation with Emile's dilemma — whether it is better to become more civilized or more natural — has become a perennial syndrome, leading to greater and greater literary complexity and sometimes to art. The problem is one which Frances Brooke's articulate glimpse of England and Canada can enlighten at little, but not resolve. The gardens of both remain chequered with shade.