churches have shared should add imaginative insights to works about them. Rather, if attention were centred on the history of religion, the whole subject could be examined from a new perspective.

If the history of the Christian religion in Canada were seen as a particular instance of the history of religion in human society, it would be possible to move from the level of overt activities such as the prohibition movement to an analysis of the ways in which Christian beliefs and institutions gave legitimacy to or undermined social values and agencies. In practice, did the nature of the Christian religious experience inhibit or expedite the adaptation of the social and political structure to new circumstances, or did it protect the *status quo*? What were the social effects of revivalism or more generally of evangelical forms of religion as opposed to its otherworldly function as understood by the church and the individual? What are the characteristics and the sources of the secularization of Canadian society? Has the religious impulse which nourished the growth of the churches begun to wane or is it flowing in new channels? If so, what are the implications of this change for our social and political development?

Dr. Grant and his collaborators did not set out to answer these kinds of questions. They have given us instead a well-constructed and often stimulating account which will be an indispensable starting point for those who wish to penetrate more deeply into the history of the Canadian church or to seek different insights into our religious experience. For this we should be very grateful.

G. S. FRENCH

The British-Americans; The Loyalist Exiles in England, 1774-1789. Mary Beth Norton. Boston and Toronto, Little, Brown and Company, 1972.

Praise falls superfluously on a prize-winning book. The winner of the Allan Nevins award of the Society of American Historians is a fair and splendidly balanced account of the aging and dejected Tory lions of the American Revolution who found refuge in Britain but were seldom satisfied. Most of the principals of the book and much of their correspondence are familiar to scholars of the Revolution. Those who left no correspondence and are completely forgotten, lost in the lower reaches of British society, have disappeared from history. Miss Norton estimates that altogether there were between seven and eight thousand Loyalists who took up permanent residence in Britain. Considering the many who passed and repassed the Atlantic between 1774 and 1790, a more precise estimate would entail enormous labour and would still be open to suspicion. Future citizens of the Atlantic Provinces such as Hannah Winslow, Ward Chipman and Charles Inglis, appear fleetingly but

for reasons much more general the book is a most useful adjunct for those interested in Atlantic history. The Revolution fashioned us as much as any other single event in our past.

Swift narrative in a fine, spare prose, laced with succinct interpretation, tells the travails of adherents of the Crown who looked to Britain for what they were sure, up to Saratoga, would be but temporary relief. Their disillusionment makes a sad story. They had to learn the habits of mendicancy and accept the dictum that the gratuities awarded by the British Government were a privilege and not a right. Sighing for return to their native America, they compensated themselves, as far as their limited means would afford, with the cursory pleasures of the London theatres, zoos and public gardens. They endured the strictures and opinions of the Commissioners of Compensation who, they thought, were too wary of false pretences and spurious claims. Envious of one another as well as of rebel success, querulous of the British war effort, it was inevitable that they should become an unhappy breed of men. Much of what Miss Norton has written has appeared in other works but in incidental or postscript form. Her book has unity, coherence, authority on the subject that has yet been unequaled.

Miss Norton does not confine herself to the narrow limits of her title. Possibly the most admirable feature of *The British-Americans* is her sophisticated handling of the causes of the Revolution and the conflict of loyalties it created. There is no extravagaza of intellectualism on the meaning of Loyalism, no philosophic hyperbole or academic gamesmanship of the kind to which graduate seminars have perhaps become too accustomed. Before July 4, 1776, she declares, it is impossible to make rigid distinction between rebels and Loyalists. She holds firmly to the evidence of how loyalties were changed by the march of events, especially by military ascendancies and armed occupations. She eschews elaborate ideologies and is well in the van of American historians who are at last prepared to recognize that between the contending minorities there was an enormous area of opinion to which any kind of militant and activist loyalty came sullenly and apathetically. "Loyalty was the norm: rebellion was not" (p. 8). Accepting this as a truism, one is the more compelled to admire the efficiency of Samuel Adams and his vigilantes who acquired their immense military advantage by intimidation, coercion and terror so early in the rebellion. While anarchy reigned safety came first. There comes to mind the gleeful remark made by Adams after Trenton, that the people of New Jersey would accept allegiance to whichever side could offer protection. To show how military success and failure can dramatically alter loyalties our Atlantic history can offer the example of Eastport in 1814.

The book is highly compassionate but rather hard on Loyalist historiography. Miss Norton allows little credibility to the post-1778 strategy based on the Loyalist belief that British arms would acquire popular support wher-

ever they might appear in force. Loyalist historians, she argues, could never rid themselves of wishful thinking and self-deception. Yet her own book and those of many other recent American historians offer much evidence to show that, if the successes of 1780 and early 1781 had been sustained, popular compliance in British victory could have become permanent. Had Cornwallis obeyed his orders, had the fleet not failed off the Virginia Capes, who can say that the South might not have been held? In the words of Wellington at Waterloo, it might have been "a damn'd near thing." Exercises in self-deception are normal in war and in histories of warfare. If the Patriots had not excelled in this department and run their luck to the utmost, they could easily have lost.

The British-Americans is a needed and welcome addition to the literature of the Revolution. A note on sources is extremely useful.

W. S. MACNUTT

Some Thoughts on Understanding Canadian History

The publication of *festschrifts* in honour of Donald Creighton and Frank Underhill invites some reflection on both the current state of Canadian historiography and on the work of two historians whose careers have been so notable and yet so diverse.[1] It is, at first glance, surprising that the two should be so different. Both Creighton and Underhill were Ontario-born of British stock, and Ontario-educated. Both graduated from the University of Toronto. Both were Balliol men at Oxford, Underhill in Classics, Creighton in History. Both were reared in the political tradition and positivist philosophy of historical study; neither acquired nor used a sociological approach to history. But there the superficial similarities end. Both gave their lives to the study, teaching and writing of history, but how differently and to what different ends! The differences between the two historians were fundamental differences of mind, personality and historical practice.

Underhill was radical. The best of his mind was analytical and critical, reducing experience to discrete fragments. In effect it was destructive, although not in intent. In this, as in his style, he reflected much of the man he greatly delighted to honour — Goldwin Smith, whom he saw as one of the few first rate minds to address itself to the 'Canadian question'.[2] On the

1 John S. Moir, ed., *Character and Circumstance — Essays in Honour of Donald Grant Creighton* (Toronto, 1970); Norman Penlington, ed., *On Canada — Essays in Honour of Frank H. Underhill* (Toronto, 1971).

2 Underhill similarly admired André Seigfried, who possessed a not dissimilar intellect.