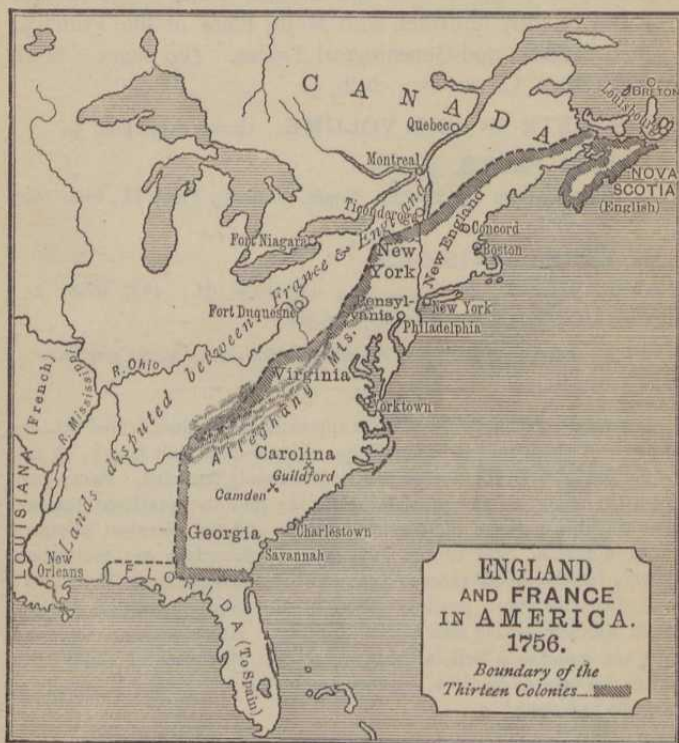


to connect it with Canada by a string of forts placed along the Mississippi and its tributary the Ohio. If they could have carried out this gigantic and wide-stretching plan, they would have shut in the English colonies between the Alleghany mountains and the sea, and prevented them from extending into the interior of the continent. The weak point of the plan was



that the French were far too few in numbers to execute any such project. Though they counted among them many hardy backwoodsmen and fur-traders, who had explored all the waterways of the West, they could not back these pioneers up with solid masses of population. There were not more than 180,000