At the beginning of the seventeenth century, when permanent English settlements were begun in America, the people of Great Britain had just passed from the reign of an age of Faith into that of an age of Reason. In the realm of the former, there was such absolute intellectual laziness, and indifference to the exercise of reason in speculative matters, that men accepted tenets in religion and politics, however absurd, as truths, and bestowed no thought upon them. Theology was like a cast-iron machine, utterly inflexible. It fashioned social life in its most minute details. The people were simpl...