

Chapter 1 : Canada, the Spellbinder

*Canada, the Spellbinder (Classic Reprint) [Lilian Whiting] on theinnatdunvilla.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. Excerpt from Canada, the Spellbinder XI. Canada IN the panama-pacific exposit'ion XII.*

Of the progress of the souls of men and women along the grand roads of the universe, all other progress is the needed emblem and sustenance. What hinders that he be born here? The new times need a new man, the complementary man, whom plainly this country must furnish. Of no use are the men who study to do exactly as was done before, who can never understand that to-day is a new day. AGAINST a background of bewilderingly varied activities which projects from the earliest years of the sixteenth well into the twentieth century and reveals itself as a moving panorama of explorers, pioneers, adventurers, traders and missionaries, there stands out a line of remarkable personalities whose latter-day leadership has largely initiated as well as dominated the conditions of their time and the bequest of century to century. They were kindled by the growing achievements of the constructive genius that had already projected the wonderful steel highways carrying civilisation into the trackless wilderness. This constructive genius bridged the mighty rivers; created extensive waterways by means of canals connecting lakes and flowing streams; in still later years this genius commanded the cataracts and rapids to transform their ceaseless motion into motor power for traction, and lighting, and other service of industrial and economic value. Each successive civilisation of the world, indeed, has shown an unbroken line of exceptional personalities in whom has been focussed the power of their epoch. They are the centres through which this power becomes manifest in applied purposes and special achievements. Civilisation itself is but the evolutionary representation of successive conditions of increasing enlightenment. With each succeeding age does man recognise more and more clearly his relation to the moral order of the universe. The guidance of unseen destiny leads him on, and in the records of no country is this working out of the invisible design more unmistakably shown than in those of the Dominion of Canada. This golden thread discloses itself to retrospective [page 2] scrutiny through a period of three centuries of time. If to the courage and heroism of the original discoverers of the land too great recognition can hardly be given, yet to those who have made these discoveries of value by bringing the resources of a continent into useful relations with humanity recognition is not less due. Here were vast areas of land; enchanting rivers, noble lakes, majestic mountains; untold wealth in minerals and in the boundless potentialities of agriculture; a marvellous [sic] country that is not only a land of promise, but a veritable Promised Land. Yet are [page 3] its possibilities like those of the ether of space, until it is rendered accessible to restless, struggling humanity by the indomitable power of great spirits, of wise and forcible leaders of progress who are perhaps the pioneers of the physical world in a degree similar to that of lofty beings in the realms unseen. It is such as they who create the conditions which render all these immeasurable resources of practical value to humanity. Such men as Sir William Cornelius Van Horne and Charles Melville Hays; men who have courage as well as vision; who see beyond all barriers; men who dare do that which weaker souls fear to attempt—such men are as truly among the creative forces of their country as are its original discoverers. Little reference to these earliest years of Canadian history could be made, even in the mere outline which alone is possible in these pages, without a vivid recognition of episode and adventure so startling, so often brilliant and romantic, so often tragic in its heroic endurance and ultimate fatality as to illuminate the horizon of history with a flame not unlike the dazzling lights in Polar skies. There were miracle hours that condensed experiences as significant as those often diffused throughout an entire cycle of time. Mingled with these were the long, slow periods of patient labour. It is not with sudden leaps and bounds alone that life progresses, but by the steady, normal advance of persistent endeavour. Nor can demands for improved conditions [page 4] [unnumbered page, includes illustration: James Mill, referring to his experiences while in the London office, engaged with the affairs of India, says: Instead of being indignant or dispirited because I could not entirely have my own way, to be pleased and encouraged when I could have the smallest part of it; and when that could not be, to bear with complete equanimity the being over-ruled altogether. The incomers from France, the incomers from Great Britain, represented two distinct, even if not unfriendly nations. There were differences of race, of language, of

creed. There were differing convictions as to institutions and laws. Until the Confederation the interests of the people were largely local rather than united. The unifying of a country of such enormous geographical extent and including such vital differences among its widely scattered inhabitants, must always prefigure itself as one of the signal feats in the statesmanship of the world. The very magnitude of the resources and the infinite riches of Canada presented themselves in the guise of difficulties and obstacles to be conquered. Nature provided the vast systems of lakes and rivers; but these required vast schemes of engineering construction to render them of fullest service as continuous waterways. The broad rivers [page 5] must be bridged. Triumphs of construction have arisen, such as the Victoria Jubilee Bridge across the St. Lawrence at Montreal, a marvellous feat of engineering, and the splendid steel arch bridge over the Gorge of Niagara. Again, in the interests of transcontinental transit, the mountain ranges, whose peaks seem to pierce the sky, must be overcome. Unmapped tracts of almost impenetrable forests; wastes of rocks, and swamps, and the treacherous muskeg; or immense plains, still inhospitable to the destined tide of settlers, must all be subdued in the interests of the advancing civilisation and the development of a country bordering upon three oceans with an extent of coast-line exceeding that of any other country in the world. Then there were incalculable mining possibilities, precious metals, copper, iron, coal; there were unlimited resources of lumber, but the trees must be felled, and there must be railways or waterways to transport the timber. Canada offered water-power enough to turn the wheels of all the manufactories of Europe, but this power was useless until harnessed by the constructive genius of man. Another valuable asset was the pulpwood, the vastness of which suggested this country as the very centre of the pulp and paper manufacturing industry; but between the thousands of acres covered with white spruce trees, and the lakes and rivers contiguous ready to furnish the power, what marvels of mechanism must be duly constructed to bring [page 6] the pulpwood and the water-power into service of man. As an indication of the proportions to which this industry has already grown it may be cited that for the fiscal year ending on June 30, , the Canadian pulp print papermakers shipped to the United States alone seven hundred and ninety-four and a half millions of pounds, an increase of one hundred and eighty millions over the amount shipped to the States in the preceding year. Here, indeed, was a country rivalling any other in the world in the largess of nature, but whose every aspect was a challenge to the constructive enterprise of man. Nature, with unsurpassed lavishness, presented the raw material; it rested with man to stamp it with value. Thus the stimulus to industrial and commercial activities was second to none other in the history of nations. These were the conditions that confronted, as well as rewarded, the early discoverers and pioneers. Did some prescience of all this potential wealth awaiting the centuries to come drift across the ocean spaces and touch minds sensitive to its impress? Each bore a magic mirror turned forward to reflect the promise of the future. In the hand of each was carried the lighted torch. It was passed [page 7] from each explorer to his successor. Cartier, who navigated the St. There followed La Salle, Marquette, Joliet, and others. Sieur de Maisonneuve consecrated the site of Montreal as the first act of his landing. It is little wonder that the visitor to this entrancing city to-day feels some unanalyzed and mystic touch pervading the air, something that must forever haunt and pervade his memories of stately, magnificent Montreal. No other city on the continent has this indefinable element of magic and of charm. The seventeenth century was an almost unbroken period of bold and daring adventure and of missionary activities. All over the world, at this time, was there manifested the passion for exploration. It prevailed over the entire continent of Europe. It recorded its progress on the new continent of North America. The discovery of Hudson Bay has been placed by [page 8] some statisticians as early as , when it is surmised that Cabot may have reached it; but the absolute and authentic date still lingers somewhat in the region of conjecture and mystery. It was in that Henry Hudson is known to have first seen it as he sailed in search of the North Pole. Hudson Bay became a centre of intense interest to all the exploring navigators. Admiral Sir Thomas Button sailed in search of Hudson, or of some tidings of his fate. He returned without the knowledge he sought for, but with much information regarding all the western coast. Still later came Foxe and James. In Foxe discovered a fallen cross which he judged had been erected by his predecessor, the English Admiral, and he raised it and affixed an inscription and the date. Baffled for the time by [page 9] obstacles that seemed insurmountable, they returned to England to ask the assistance of King Charles II. Radisson remained for life in the service of the Company. Let no one mistake the purpose of the Company,

however, as one inspired by purely philanthropic or patriotic ardour. The dominant aim was by no means primarily that of the development of the new and almost unknown country. The servants of the Company were not braving the terrors and hardships of the wilderness on exclusively altruistic inspirations. On the contrary, it was [page 10] their policy to conceal the existence of the vast riches of the land and to represent it as inaccessible to any one beyond Indians and hunters. No effort to change this impression was made by those concerned with the administration of the Company, but, rather, they were more or less untiring in assisting to confirm it. They had their occult reasons for not being averse to the representation of the entire North-West as being quite valueless for the purposes of civilization. The impression, if not the conviction, was well authorised that the climate rendered the region quite impossible for habitation; and the region in which now lies the most wonderful wheat-growing belt of the world, and whose fertility under cultivation renders it capable of supporting a population as large as that of the entire United States at the present time estimated at one hundred millions, was assumed to be a region only capable of sustaining wild animals, Indians, and the most hardy hunters and traders. Now it is traversed by three transcontinental railways which have opened an immense business of travel and traffic; and beside dozens of prosperous young towns and villages it contains Winnipeg with its quarter of a million people; Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon, [page 11] Regina; the important new terminal seaport of Prince Rupert, and the still older and more developed port of Vancouver; to say nothing of the scenic grandeur through all the Mount Robson locale, that has captured the enthusiasm of the world. The tradition of the rigours of climate has become so popularized that even as late as the summer of a New England tourist faring forth for a trip through the great North-West of Canada was urged to provide himself with furs and rugs enough to fit out an expedition to the Polar regions. As a matter of fact the only embarrassment encountered as to temperature was that of trying to discover sufficiently thin clothing for Winnipeg in the opening September days, where the sunshine poured down just then with a flood of radiance that fairly rivaled that of a summer in the Capital city of the United States. Edmonton repeated the same wonderful luxuriance with the same delicious coolness at night; and the journey on through the magnificent mountain scenery to Prince Rupert had the exquisite temperature of an Italian spring. Their aim was the gaining of wealth and it was one signally successful. Immense quantities of valuable furs were shipped homeward every year; the shares in the Company became more and more valuable as magnificent dividends were continually declared. They controlled a territory exceeding an area of two million square miles. It was peopled only by the Indians. Yet all through the seventeenth century run the records of that self-sacrificing and heroic band, the Jesuit missionaries, whose devotion to the Christian ideal led them on with a faith and fervor that consecrates their memory. The ambition of the Company to extend their trading posts still farther and farther inland incited still more explorations into the unknown North-West. They builded better than they knew, for while their aim hardly went beyond that of increasing their own revenues, the results were inevitable factors in the development of the country. That this is true is not in any wise, as has already been said, to be regarded as in the nature of philanthropic or patriotic zeal. They regarded the country and its wealth in the light of a personal perquisite for their exploiting and financial benefit. From motives of self-interest, if not entirely those of humanity, the Company had treated the Indians with kindness and justice and had thus made the British flag something [page 13] to be held in respect by the tribes. Thus they had built up a strong reliance for themselves of friendliness on the part of the dusky natives. One of the eminent historians, George Bancroft, of Boston, U. Explorations, or the extension of trade, were alike vigilantly discouraged. Steps were therefore taken to unite the tribes against all whites not officially connected with the Company. The means adopted were worthy of the object desired, but could have been the outcome of an extraordinary disregard of the ordinary amenities of life. The Indians were told that these outsiders would rob and cheat them in the barter of their furs. The first quarter of the eighteenth century had but just passed when in Pierre Gaultier de Varennes Sieur de la Verendrye, who was stationed on Lake Nipigon, became imbued with ardour regarding the great question of the day, the North-West Passage; and in he, with his three sons and an armed force of about fifty men, left Montreal for the West, reaching the shores of Lake Superior within two months, and pushing on "trading and exploring meanwhile" through the all but impenetrable wilderness until he sailed up the Red River, and in the autumn of established a fort near the site now occupied by the city of Winnipeg.

This young man was Alexander Mackenzie, who came to Canada in 1791, and immediately entered the fur trade. Later, owing to personal dissensions and conflicts of the Company with another of its agents, Mackenzie was commissioned to the Athabasca district, and it was there, apparently, that his project of exploration to the Arctic Ocean took possession of him. He journeyed to Great Slave Lake after encountering immense difficulties—rapids, long portages, boiling caldrons, and treacherous eddies that threatened to engulf his barque; but at the end of the month he found himself on the river that now bears his name, and on the 12th of July he first sighted the Arctic Ocean. Then there intervened a visit to England before his second expedition in

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CANADA THE SPELLBINDER. CHAPTER I. THE CREATIVE FORCES OF CANADA "All parts away for the progress of souls, All religion, all solid things, arts, governments—'all that was or is apparent upon this globe or.

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