

FOREWORD

Some two years ago I jotted down a series of light sketches about Canadian scenes which I had known and loved during my various sojourns in the great land of "Our Lady of the Snows", that lovely but in some respects misleading title of Kipling's, which has led many untravelled Britons to imagine that we are forever snowbound here, and who are startled when one writes of the beauties of the flora and the glory of the gay-hued birds—almost all migratory, alas!—which abound in the summer days. I had intended to call these sketches "O lovely Land", because it is in very deed a lovely land; but when I showed these scribblings to various friends for criticism, they were unanimous in urging me to make them more personal in tone—to include things, places and people whom I had known in my long and in some ways, nomadic life. So I scrapped what I had written—incidentally helping the paper salvage campaign—and began the book now offered you.

It wasn't easy, because I had no diaries or notes of any kind to call upon, and only that fickle jade Memory with which to waft my sail up the stream of time. However, I set to work and here is the result in a volume dedicated in loving gratitude, to my numerous Canadian friends, both old and new, too many to name, who have during my latest and very prolonged sojourn among them, done everything in their power to lighten my banishment from home and make me happy, not only through their wonderful financial help—which can be repaid in due course—but still more by their kindly understanding. That is a thing which can never be repaid because it's one of those fragile but lovely emanations of the spirit and the heart for which I am eternally grateful. Therefore to them one and all comes my tribute of gratitude in the shape of these thumbnail sketches of episodes in my long life.

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