

disease. Her Aunt implored the little girl to return to the safe shelter of her homeland, but Helmi had a mind of her own and had no intention of retracing her steps. She was in the land of freedom, romance and easy money and here she would stay. I called her Helmi Milander in compliment to Emil Milander, who had really introduced me to his country and countrymen.

"Painted Fires" was the name I chose for the book, lifting these words from the fragment of a poem which stuck in my mind; I do not know from what source:

"We cannot draw from empty wells,
Nor warm ourselves at painted fires."

I called the book by this name for I wanted to lay down a hard foundation of truth as to conditions in Canada. As a Canadian I blush with shame when I think of the false flattery which has been given to our country by immigration agencies in Europe, anxious to bring out settlers for the profit of steamship and railway companies. It's all fantastic now and seems long ago and far away, but there was dark tragedy in it for the deceived ones and Canada got a black eye, which in the minds of some people has lasted even until this time.

"Painted Fires" was published in 1925 and has gone through many editions, been serialized many times and is still in print. The year after its publication in Canada it was translated into Finnish and published in Helsinki and I think all the Finnish papers on this continent ran it as a serial.

It brought me into pleasant contact with many Finnish people and I was particularly pleased to receive letters written in Finnish, telling me that although I had not a Finnish name, they felt sure that I must have Finnish blood to be able to enter into their spirit. Could any author ask for more than that?