

We Nominate as Leading Woman in Alberta—Nellie McClung

She is the Most Outstanding Figure the Canadian West Has Produced



MRS. NELLIE McCLUNG is, without doubt, the most representative woman in the Canadian West, hence, in the New Dominion. For the West is the product of the Twentieth Century, and the Twentieth Century is Canada's.

From the country of the cow-puncher of scarce a decade and a half ago, it has come to be to-day a thriving settled land, teeming with cattle, undulating with the rippling waves of the great wheat sea, and playing its part in the great fight for democracy, just as surely, as poignantly, as are the Twentieth Century Canadians fighting the fight which will perpetuate this age, not only as Canada's but as Democracy's.

Out of the vastness comes Mrs. McClung. Out of it—and part of it! Born in Ontario, you say! True—lucky Ontario.

But she has imbibed the spirit of the West, especially of Alberta, and it has lifted her far above mediocrity. And yet, she is but typical of Alberta women. They stand alone as the most progressive, the most public-spirited aggregation of people in Canada to-day. They are thinkers—but chiefly doers. They have produced the first woman M.P. in the Dominion—Mrs. McKinney.

"Bravo," we say, "Alberta women!"

YOU know Nellie McClung. Every woman in Canada knows her, admires her, loves her. And the better you know her the more you love to hear her, the more you appreciate a little retrospect.

Everywhere Mrs. McClung has gone—and where has she NOT been in Canada—she has taken with her the message of the prairies and has forced us to glance back down the vistas of the years to the time when, as a child, she first rambled there, a very minute part of their vastness.

But to retrace our steps even farther into her life history—she was born at Chatsworth, Ontario, in 1873. Whole-souled, fearless, genuine, little Nellie was not destined to remain long in the East. In 1880 her family moved West, going by train until they reached the Red River, which they crossed in a row boat. Her experiences following this move are responsible for the wholesomeness of the thoughts she afterwards wove into such books as "Sowing Seeds in Danny," and "The Second Chance." They exhale the breath of the Western winters, and bask in the sunshine of its springs.

NELLIE cared not for schools. Little good it would have been for her to do so, since there were none in the district! She "expanded" for three happy years.

Speaking reminiscently of this she said:

"Once I played with a nice fat, greasy little fellow called Indian Tommy, whose mother fought intermittently with a lady friend of hers for three days on the river bank. I attended all the sessions, and all would have been well, only, in the excess of my delight over Indian Tommy's victory, I came home hilarious. After that, I stayed in my own yard. Indian Tommy looked in through the gate, and brought me beads and gum—almost as good as new—and we were very miserable."

Soon, however, a school was opened near by and it was with great timidity

that the little one presented herself before the school master. Things were not as she had expected, for he, Mr. Frank Schultz, understood her, and she progressed marvellously well under his instructions. It is to him that she gives credit for the fame that now

attends her. Unselfish and humble, you may say, but therein lies Mrs. McClung.

When she finished being taught she started to teach. This she did at Manitou and other points, and this she continues to do to this very day, on the public platforms, advocating Equal Franchise, Temperance, and other pet theories; through her books, and never more strongly than through her example.

For Mrs. McClung is a devoted wife and mother.

In 1896 she married Robert Wesley McClung. Four sons and one daughter are her special pride. She has stated laughingly, that one would be surprised at the interest that is taken in her husband's socks. Her mails invariably contain letters advising her to stay at home and mend them. "And yet," she says, "you know they are never left unmended."

MRS. McCLUNG'S literary talent displayed itself when she was very young. It then generally took the form of epitaphs on dead dogs and kittens. One of her early masterpieces ran:

"Here lies dear little Silvie Moggie,
"Silvie died—oh, far too young,
"From a bite from Philip Sutcliffe,
"Philip bit her on the tongue."

Now the brutal Philip (who was her dog), had really shaken the kitten, "Silvie Moggie" to death. But why sacrifice music for facts?

When the family moved from Winnipeg to Edmonton to live, Mrs. McClung was welcomed by the Women's Organizations there, especially by the Alberta Equal Franchise League, and by the W.C.T.U. The delegation, which she headed, appealing for Equal Franchise, will long be remembered as the largest that ever assembled on the floor of the Alberta Legislature.

Mrs. McClung's interest in school questions became more pronounced when her children came to the age when they must face the world. Her advice to women, that it is their duty to see what kind of world it is, for which they are preparing their children, and what sort of contribution those children will be to the world, gives evidence of the consideration she has given social questions.

THE non-partisan attitude of the woman voter is a subject causing much discussion to-day, pro and con. Many leading women have fearlessly expressed themselves in favor of this attitude for women. The Saskatoon Equal Franchise League sent out a questionnaire on the subject.

Mrs. McClung's replies came as usual with a vim. To the question, "Do you think that women should identify themselves with party politics?" she answered:

"I do not think that women should identify themselves with political parties, for the reason that if they do, they will work against instead of with each other, and the good which the woman should do would be offset by that done by some other woman. Dividing the women into two hostile camps will leave the situation very much as we found it, with all its old bitterness, squabbling, misrepresentations, and waste of energy."

"I am not in favor of a woman's party as such for I see no future for such a movement, but if women will remain independent in thought and

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Mrs. Nellie McClung, of Edmonton, Alberta [Copyright Photo by Jessop]

A Few of Her Epigrams

I NEVER cared for the pedestal idea of woman. It is so hard to come down and cut wood.

We must jar ourselves loose from the old ideas and the old beliefs. One of these ideas is that women are protected. We are protected theoretically—like Belgium.

It is pathetically true that the world takes you at the estimation that you place upon yourself. Women have never placed a high enough value on their place in life.

This is a time of sacrifice. Do something more before the cancerous tentacles of the liquor traffic reach to the heart of this young nation.

As a business proposition, the liquor traffic is a decided and unqualified frost.

We hate the Kaiser, not because he is fighting us, but because he is making war on non-combatants. I hate the liquor traffic for exactly the same reason. I'd be ashamed to say I am neutral in such a war.

Man's most brilliant witticism is that "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world."

We can't do much with moral sentiment. There is sentiment to burn on almost any subject.

We are told that women must not invade the sacred world of politics. Politics are too corrupt.

You cannot blame the women. If a man says that politics are too corrupt, he admits one of two things—either that he is a party to it, or that he is unable to prevent it.

Women would have to get up early and sit up late to make a worse political mess than there is now.

In their attitude to woman suffrage the most apathetic are the comfortably married women. It is a sort of fatty degeneration of the heart. This attitude of cow-like contentment is at the bottom of the trouble.

Love and justice are at the bottom of the suffrage movement.

The young men are growing up. And the old men sometimes get converted, and if they don't change, well, they die!

Resignation is a cheap, indolent human virtue.

Canada is a gift from God, a gilt-edged, leather-bound book.