

# IN THE DAYS OF THE CANADA COMPANY.

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## CHAPTER I.

### SPIRIT OF THE TIMES.

*"Canada is a giant in its cradle."*

IN 1791 the Reign of Terror had begun, and Britain felt the reflex agitation. There the trial of Warren Hastings held public attention; and while France was declared a republic, Constantinople was desolated by an unparalleled fire, and Egypt lost a million of her people by the plague. The guillotine became the death-bed of a Royal family and of hundreds of the nobility; the King of Sweden fell by the hand of an assassin; Europe was in a turmoil; but the English Government had time to think for the interests of the colony which then was beginning to claim attention from the Mother Country. It, too, vast as was its territory and scattered its sparse population, felt the strain arising from the animosities of race and local faction. In 1811 took place the bitter struggle between the Hudson's Bay Company and its opponents. Lord Selkirk, energetic, persevering and indomitable, with his hardy Countess, formed his settlement of Highlanders, and Kildonan the New became the scene of a fresh conflict. Even on the fiftieth parallel of north latitude there was war and commotion—a struggle for land and power; and disputed titles, enthusiasm, philanthropy, and complexions red and white, made one more slide in the panorama of the world's battle.