

AWAKENED CANADA: A PROPHECY FROM THE ACTUAL

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FOR the most part the business of prophecy no longer receives either payment or honors, and breath spent in forecasting anything but the weather, might more wisely be spent in cooling good broth. Nay, if a man were altogether to give himself over to prognosticating, he would soon, on the coming of winter, be compelled for lack of firing to seek warmth for his fingers in the roof of his prophetic mouth.

Yet in this century of inquiry, one may go at least so far in prophecy as to venture to deduce some very obvious, and perhaps not uninteresting effects from some good, plain, and highly-interesting causes. Our present business is to attempt by such means, not so much to forecast, as to indicate upon lines sufficiently broad, what manner of future Canada has already entered upon. Furthermore, as it is our wish to be enfranchised from all consideration of politics, either national or international, and to try to bring to our study as much curious interest and as little foolish bias as is in any wise possible,—and because it is always very well worth while to get a point of view that is radically new,—we shall make a little attempt to dismiss our own person altogether, and to view this large-flung country of ours through the astonished round spectacles of a globe-trotting “Man from Mars.”

In the first place our Martian, like an intelligent and systematic traveller, has devoted his first studies and journeyings to that “Middle Continent,” old Europe. And when leaving it, to his scientific and mathematically-ordered mind it has seemed most natural to follow the course of the sun, and to move westward upon

lines of latitude. While still upon the Atlantic it is explained to him that during the last century the shifting of population upon this planet has been almost entirely to the northern continent of the western hemisphere. And from political causes, and because there existed a very general belief that the upper half of that northern continent,—whither his ship is now bearing him,—was a region of ice and snow, all but a very small part of that emigration had gone to the southern division. Indeed, so great an activity had been created thereby, and by the industrial revival consequent upon it, that hundreds of thousands of emigrants who *had* gone to the northern half, and hundreds of thousands more who were afterwards born in it, were in the end also drawn to the southward. And after seventy-five years of that, the proportion of population, northern and southern, stood as five millions to eighty.

Now our Martian has provided himself with an atlas, and while still on shipboard, too, he already begins to make his investigations. At once he notes some rather unlooked-for coincidences. The area of “Canada” is 3,650,000 square miles, or within less than one-twenty-fifth of being the same as that of Europe. Both, too, have almost the same extent of territory within the arctic circle. On the right, Europe reaches out, irregular and peninsula-like, to the westward. On the left, Canada extends itself, with like irregularity towards the east. For a Baltic there is a Hudson’s Bay,—much less accessible he is informed, but vastly richer in fisheries. For a Scandinavia there is a Labrador. For a Mediterranean there is a Gulf of St. Lawrence and