

The Making of Canada.

Hall Caine, the famous novelist, being asked when on a recent visit to this country whether he thought Canadian life furnished material for a great novel, replied, "Yes, decidedly. You have the descendants of two great nationalities diametrically opposite to each other in tastes and characteristics, two dominant religions equally opposed to each other, and a country which would give a fit setting to the greatest events in history." Yet quick and keen observer though he is, a transient visit could give but a very inadequate conception of the real possibilities of our young country.

Few indeed, even of our own people, realize how pre-eminently Canada is the land of great things. Bounded on three sides by oceans, on the fourth by lakes that are inland seas, with prairies for wheat fields, and "woods of pine and maple where England might be lost," with river highways thousands of miles long, with a bit of a lake in her interior where you may drop your canoe and paddle a distance of 8,000 miles, in the forefront among mineral producing nations,—the stupendous possibilities that lie before her dazzle the imagination. Even now conservative business men are meditating undertakings, vast enough and apparently chimerical enough, to be the subject of a tale from the "Arabian Nights." But under our very eyes we see them being accomplished.

Also, inevitable accompaniment of large resources, Canada has her great difficulties, climatic, political, and commercial. Questions of world-wide interest, as well as those of internal but no less vital moment, are looming before her, and infant nation though she be, these problems must be grappled with, and that very promptly and with no puny arm, in the near future. Nor are our people unequal to their task. One striking characteristic of Canadian life is the thirst for knowledge which will in any way further progress.

Sacrifices of time and money are unstintingly made for this end.

Doubly strange is it then to see such a people comparatively indifferent to one chief essential of a comprehensive grasp of the questions confronting them—the history of the making of their own country.

True, it has been asserted by more than one of our foremost Canadian scholars, that Canadian history is as yet of no very great importance, that we play only a very minor part upon the stage of nations. But how great a part was England playing in the world's eyes during the reign of Alfred the Great, or at Hastings, or at the signing of the Magna Charta? Yet from these small beginnings was shaped the whole future trend of the British empire, a not altogether insignificant chapter in the world's history! With the young country as with the young person, it is less present achievements than latent possibilities in which we are interested. And we must know our country in order to know what to expect from it. To understand and interpret the present, we must know it in the past, its constituent elements, with their characteristics and origin; its different phases of life; and its struggles, political and sanguinary, with all the forces working toward its present stage of evolution. The past with its mistakes and triumphs should furnish not only insight but foresight for the present and future.

Though brief, Canadian history has been neither insignificant nor uninteresting. Our bold predecessor, the Indian, the daring French explorers, the heroic French missionaries, the great Companies and their colonies, furnish pages rivalling in interest the far-famed days of chivalry. Our birth as a British colony we owe to the life and death struggle for colonial supremacy of the two foremost nations of Europe. In later days we have the coming of the Loyalists, political strife, rebellion, confederation, the opening of