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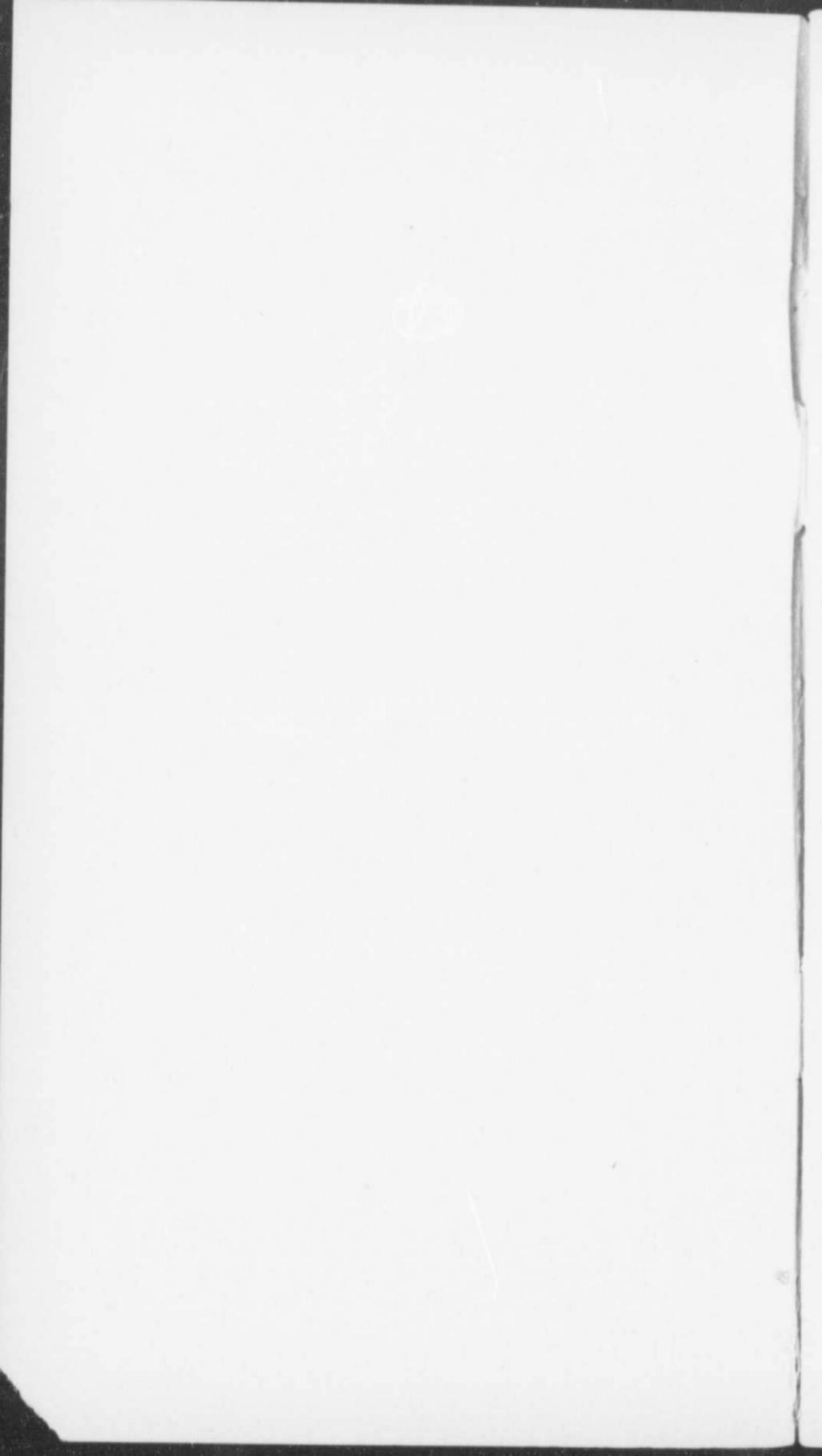
**Finns in Europe**  
and in  
**Canada**



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## A GLANCE AT FINNISH HISTORY.

The earliest home of the Finnish people has been traced to be the northern slopes of the Altai Mountains in Asia. The Finns belong to the Fenno-Hungarian family of the Mongolian race. Several hundred years before Christ this ancient family of peoples had travelled from their early homes to the district of the Ural Mountains—the boundary between Asia and Europe. At this time our early ancestors are already divided into several groups, of which the most noted are the Bulgarians (descendants of the famous Huns), the Hungarians and the Finns. All but the Finns remained in Southern and Central Europe, while the Finns travelled north, building their homes around the present Gulf of Finland and the southern shores of the Baltic Sea, about 700 A.D. Finally, a large portion of them entered Finland itself and drove the Laplanders before them to the Arctic shores, about 1000 A.D.

Finland, called by the people themselves "Suomi"—the swampy region, is bounded by the Gulfs of Bothnia and Finland, while on the land side its boundaries are Russia, Norway and Sweden. "The land of a thousand lakes," as it is often called on account of the multitude of its

lakes, has an area of 136,000 square miles, and is more abundantly supplied with water than any other country in the world.

King Erik the 9th of Sweden invaded Finland in 1157 A.D., and conquered the country. The result was almost continuous war between Russia and Sweden. At length Finland became a province of Russia. On the 27th of March, 1809, the Czar Alexander first visited Finland and proclaimed it a Russian Grand-Duchy. At the same time he allowed the country to have its own government and laws, and these it still, though not without struggle, retains.

When King Erik entered Finland he was accompanied by Archbishop Henry of Upsala, Sweden, (an Englishman). The Finns, who had been pagans, were forcibly baptized near the city of Turku, at that time the capital. The Archbishop remained in the country to Christianize the people, and preached and baptized everywhere, until in January of the next year he was assassinated by a Finnish farmer. He was afterwards made the patron saint of Finland.

The church long remained Roman Catholic, but during the reign of Gustaf Wasa of Sweden (died 1560) the Reformation entered both Sweden and Finland, and since then they have enjoyed many liberties. The first translation of the New Testament into Finnish was made by

Mikael Agricola, the bishop of Turku, in 1548. He also wrote the first Finnish ABC book and a prayer-book. Because some doubt had been expressed as to the propriety of talking to God in the Finnish language he wrote at the beginning of the book. "He will hear the Finnish language, who understands the minds of all men." The Protestant king of Sweden, Gustaf Adolf (died Nov. 6th, 1632), was the most powerful earthly weapon in the hands of the Reformation in Finland, as well as in Sweden. The whole Bible was published in Finnish in 1642. The state church is now "Evangelical Lutheran," the chief of which is the Czar of Russia, who names all the bishops and ministers.

As a nation the Finns have long ago expressed their stand regarding the liquor question. The House of Representatives has three times already voted unanimously for entire prohibition, but His Majesty every time refused to give his sanction. The present war, however, changed the attitude of the Russian government, and at last the longed-for prohibition is in force **almost** to the letter.

That most modern "flower of civilization," the woman-suffrage question, has also been settled in Finland, where the vote of the woman is now as good as that of the man. In the House of Representatives there are at present several members of the "fair sex."

The principal political parties in Fin-

land to-day are the Socialist, the Finnish, the Swedish, and the Young Finnish. Of these the largest is the Socialist party. It may at once be asked, What is responsible for the great success of Socialism in Finland? But when one learns that Finland is called "The Promised Land of Office-bearers," and has listened to the shocking stories of the power of the clergy, especially regarding church-taxes, and has seen the filthy and by no means Christian life that many of the clergy lead, and finally when one understands the system of church government, then—and only then—will he know the cause.

## **THE LIFE OF THE COMMON PEOPLE.**

Finland can boast of its beauty and of its midnight sun (for the sun in the northern parts does not sink below the horizon during eight consecutive weeks of mid-summer), but never of its riches, as the following stanza of the Finnish national anthem indicates:

“Our land is poor, as all can tell;  
No gold our rivers hold.  
A stranger scorns its heath and fell,  
And yet this land we love full well.”

Accordingly the peasants live in most picturesque simplicity. Everything they use or wear is home-made.

The endurance of a Finn is very characteristic. There is a saying, "Nobody but a Finn would have undertaken to cultivate such a stony and marshy country." Here in Canada other farmers laugh at a Finnish settler when they see him digging ditches and trenches and canals through marshes, making his fields a garden divided into columns, but when the frost comes and takes whatever the neighbors had, leaving his untouched, the Finn will sigh with relief, "Well, I knew it."

Another characteristic of a Finn is that he is slow in adopting new farming appliances, slow in grasping anything new. Other peoples coming in contact with the Finns say that it is an enormous task to persuade them to believe in something new, but if you once get them persuaded, you cannot easily turn their mind again. Some people may say that the Finns are slow at work, but the saying, "Whatever you do, do it with tar," may furnish an explanation. The finishing touch in making a boat, a bridge, a sleigh, a wagon or a buggy, is to give it a coat of tar. If it lacks this, it is not done thoroughly—such is the opinion of a Finnish farmer. The Finns are also wonderfully slow to get angry, but when they do, they get raging, and use their knife—"puukke" (some-what like a dagger) with bloody effect.

Cleanliness again is a widely known national trait. If you travel through Finland, you will not find a single farm where

there is not a separate building specially built to serve as a bath-house. The farmer (and with him his family and hired laborers) takes a steam-bath every Saturday, and, leaving the bath-house with his body still steaming, plunges into the lake or river only a few feet away. Naked he walks into his house and there dresses himself in his "church clothes." In the winter when the rivers and lakes are frozen and he is thus prevented from taking a dive, he takes his "cold shower" by rolling on the snow, and again runs the same distance home.

The fact that a Finnish farmer never locks his doors and still fears no thieves may show the honest character of the people. And if a stranger comes along he will find every house hospitable; lodging and meals are given free of charge for several days.

After the daily labor is done and the supper over, especially on Saturday after the bath, the people, old and young, gather into the large living-room, with its white-scoured floor and benches, which serves as kitchen, dining-room, carpenter-shop, etc. Some of the older people tell stories and the rest listen. Quite often a "kantele" (a harp-like national instrument) is placed on the table and songs with kantele accompaniment are enjoyed. The Finns are very musical. Every entertainment and the smallest feast overflow with music. Even the daily toil of bargemen is

lightened with constant singing. The divine services contain lots of psalms and hymns.

On the eve of mid-summer day, June 24th, huge bonfires are lighted beside the lakes or on the hill tops and the night is spent in singing, dancing, etc. Christmas morning sees the Finns in their churches at 5 o'clock. The churches are for this occasion lit with candles, and this luxury is brought into every home. Rice and roast pork is the Christmas dish in a farmer's house, as well as in cities. May 1st is the "spring day." It is the day when the University students commence to wear their white caps, and when "sima," a national May drink, and "tippaleipa," or May-cake, are tasted and enjoyed. It is the day of parades and outings, joy and gaiety.

Though the land offers immense difficulties to the farmer, Finland is entirely an agricultural country. Its chief exports are butter, tar and lumber, of which millions of dollars worth are sent to England every month. The dairy business is the favorite occupation of the farmer, and the saying, "Be a cow and you will be well taken care of," may show that the Finns are fond of these animals.

Most of the farmers are cottagers, dependent on large farm-owners, and therefore much at their mercy. The great power of these rich farm-owners is often wrongfully used to such an extent that

they have gone far to make the life of the cotters impossible. The class of office-bearers and the clergy of the national church have, however, contributed their share to the bitterness of the coter's life. The result is ever-growing emigration to the United States and Canada. Many districts in northern Finland are already without young farm help. The government has in vain made appeals to nationalistic sentiment; the people want bread and liberty. So alarming is the situation that the government is now buying up large properties, dividing them into small parcels and selling these to the poorer farmers.

## **THE EDUCATION OF THE FINNISH PEOPLE.**

The school system in Finland is very complete and of a high standard, especially in cities, though by no means so practical as, for instance, in the United States or Canada. You will find there, first the kindergarten—two years,—then the "People's School" (Grammar School), in a lower department of two years and a higher department of four or five additional years, next the Post-graduate Institutes, after that, the "People's Institutes," and the schools leading to the University: Real Lyceum, Normal Lyceum (for boys), Ladies' School (for girls).

There are also schools of the same standing, in which the sexes are mixed in the classes. All the above-mentioned schools which prepare for the University require eight or nine years of study. The University of Finland is considered to have the same standing as the best German Universities. Commercial, Technical, Music and Art departments are also very well arranged in the great school system of the little country.

The result is that ninety-nine per cent. of the Finnish people can read or write. They have a saying regarding Finland: "The Finnish people cannot defend her national existence by might, but her national culture will always guarantee her a place among the civilized people of the world." This expresses the only ray of hope the Finns have amid the difficulties and dangers of their national existence.

### **EMIGRATION TO CANADA AND SOCIALIST AGITATION.**

The Finns who come to Canada are men who have had the least advantageous positions in their native land, most of them coming from the northern rural districts. An industrious immigrant is soon able to send for the other members of his family, and then they make for themselves a new home here and find life full of great possibilities for them. Many take up a home-

stead lot and cultivate the soil. After a few years one may see a sturdy, well-to-do Finnish farmer take the oath of allegiance to his adopted country and King. Others go to work in mines and, though they have never before seen a mine, they soon become first-class miners and even "prize-winners." A large part of them seek employment as "all-round laborers," while still others make their way to lumber or railroad construction camps.

At present there appear to be in Canada about 25,000 Finns. About ten per cent. of these are farmers, while the rest are employed as already mentioned.

A laborer of Finnish nationality was formerly regarded as preferable to other foreign laborers, but now the objection is made that they are tainted with Socialism. If a man professes to be a Socialist he will be refused employment every time. In certain places where employers fail to make a distinction and think that all Finns are Socialists, they refuse to employ any Finn. Thus all Finnish immigrants suffer on account of the prevalence of this modern disease called Socialism. Well, then, what do the Finnish Socialist agitators teach?

The exiled Socialist leaders have sought Canada as a place where they can have liberty to advocate atheism, anarchism, and free love, which is refused them in their own country. They have come to Canada overflowing with rage, hatred and

revenge towards state and church. They have travelled from one large Finnish colony to another and presented themselves as martyrs of freedom. After every speech they took up a collection, and I think the church people would faint if they saw such amounts on their collection plates. Soon they decided that the field was good, settled here, organized Socialistic societies, built large halls, founded papers, even a daily, and united all the societies into the Finnish branch of the Socialist party of Canada. And, though they created envy, grudge and hatred among the Finnish laborers toward their employers, yet the employers helped to build their halls and large gathering-places. It was pretended that they wished to build halls for temperance societies, Young People's societies, etc., but it was soon discovered what these "good" societies were. Strikes were declared in one place after another and the peaceful and industrious Finn became a terror to all.

The programme in these halls and societies was : "Burn the churches, hang the ministers, overthrow the government, divide capital and the proceeds of labor, and we shall have an ideal condition. Then men need not work more than one or two hours a day, and everybody will have plenty. Make the class boundaries clear. Ignore the marriage tie. Beware of the church, for it is only an institution of the

capitalists to blindfold the masses and prevent them from securing education. Religion is a curse to humanity. Ministers exist only to skin poor people, as everybody knows. They can take for their tax the only cow of a widow with a dozen children to support, and they will every time. You fool! Why should you ever enter a church or listen to a sermon? There is no God, no heaven, no hell, no eternity, no life after this."

Such is the doctrine that has been dominant among the Finnish people in our fair Dominion. No counter influence, no religious leaders, no wholesome literature for twenty years found their way here to rescue the Finns from these destructive errors.

The "Suomi" Synod of the U.S.A., supposed to be the nearest equivalent to the state church of Finland, has sent a minister a couple of times a year to visit places where Finnish settlement is largest, and the people have built two churches to accommodate these visitors. The one in Copper Cliff seats about five hundred. It was built some ten years ago, but has remained empty between the visits until two years ago, when the Finnish Presbyterian missionary was allowed to use it for Christian services. Soon, however, the iron heel of the Synod appeared and the missionary was shown to the door. The same Synod has a tiny building in Cobalt, though the place has very seldom been

visited by its representatives. Another branch of the Lutheran Church in the U.S.A., named the Evangelical Lutheran National Church, which professes to differ from the first-mentioned, in that all its ministers must be converted before they enter the ministry, has one church in Canada, viz., in Port Arthur. But the work of neither of these denominations is organized in Canada, nor are their societies incorporated. Accordingly they have done little to overcome the evil influence of atheistic Socialism.

### **THE PRESENT SITUATION IN CANADA.**

An experience of the present writer during the first year of his residence in Canada as a Presbyterian missionary will illustrate the situation created by Socialist agitation. At first his field extended from Espanola in the South to Cochrane in the North. About the middle of December (1913) he visited for the first time the most northerly districts of his widespread field. Reaching South Porcupine, he secured a hall for his services, put up announcements and gave invitations from house to house. Then, as a guide to the neighboring towns and their Finnish residential districts, he hired a boy of about ten years of age, the son, as it was discovered, of one of the strongest Socialist

agitators in the district. A horse and sleigh were obtained at a livery stable and off the two went. Several towns were covered during the day, announcements made and invitations given. All the "Finn-towns" were aroused to see a Finnish minister, curses and tears of love were mingled, and in the last house visited in Timmins two children walked to a table to be baptized, while the Socialist boarders let blasphemy loose on the other side of the thin partition and pushed one another against it until the missionary every moment expected it to fall. The baptism over, he hurried to the door through a large dining-room crowded with these men. Saying a few friendly words to them and inviting them to his services, the missionary tried to open the door. He found it locked; the men had the key but refused to open it. Curses, sneers and mockery poured from every direction. At last the mother of the children just baptized came to the rescue and opened the door. A man stood by the sleigh who had been offering the guide \$5 to desert the missionary, but the boy had refused; having given his word, he intended to keep it. Off went the two again, for it was high time to get to the place where service was about to be held in South Porcupine. About half way they saw a number of whiskey-crazed Finns walking towards them and filling the road from side to side. Every man had a bottle in

his hand and was swinging it in the air. The missionary made the horse gallop, thus compelling the men to divide and let him pass. When he was passing, the crowd noticed his ministerial coat, and at once arose shouts of "pappi," "pappi" (minister, in Finnish) together with a string of curses. After passing them, the missionary invited them to the service in their own language. They threw their whiskey-bottles at him but did not reach him. He thanked them for throwing away their bottles and promised to tell them of much better enjoyment if they accepted his invitation. So he left them to gaze after him.

It has been mentioned that the Finnish Socialist agitators advocate free love. Accordingly there are in Canada about three hundred Finnish couples living as husband and wife without a marriage ceremony. While they published a daily paper there would quite frequently appear an advertisement of this kind: "My name that has been Miss ———, will hereafter be Mrs. ———." This is all they do by way of solemnization of a free-love marriage. Some time afterwards another advertisement would probably appear in the following form: "I, the undersigned, have decided to adopt my maiden name again. So from this date my name that has been Mrs. ———, will be Miss ———." The man had left his victim, helpless and penniless, with her child in her arms.

## THE ONLY CURE.

The only way the people tainted with leprosy could be cured in the time of Jesus Christ was through Him. The only effective remedy for this modern disease is Jesus Christ and Him crucified, risen and empowered to lift men up to Himself. We may speak of laws, education, etc., but these are secondary. Christ only has power to save these people; He only can give them life eternal. During my first summer in Copper Cliff a drunken man one day stopped me on the school-house steps saying, "I have waited here nine hours for a doctor whom I have asked to come to the house where I board and see the baby of the mistress. If it is not dead already, it will die very soon unless the doctor comes." At once I telephoned to the doctor to come immediately. Then we went to the house. When the doctor came he examined the child and gave it some medicine. Then he left and I was about to leave also when home came the child's father. Seeing me, he at once exclaimed, "Who are you? A minister never has any business in my house. Get out." I tried to explain my presence, and, asking his pardon for entering his house without his permission, left it. Six months later the same man came into my room with his wife and asked me to write a letter of Attorney to some person in Finland who could collect a loan his wife had

made. I advised him to collect through a bank, as that would in this case be the safer and less expensive way. The man agreed and I wrote the letter to the bank. He asked how much he owed me and received the reply that I did not accept pay for such services. As they went out, I invited them to church and they promised to come some time. They came and listened attentively to the sermon. Sabbath after Sabbath they came, and a few months afterwards I was invited to go to their house and baptize their children. They continued to come to church, and soon asked me to pray for them and promised to follow Jesus Christ. They are now happy and active church members. Several such cases I could mention, but this is enough to show that even Socialists can be saved. Jesus is alive and waits to see that we by our lives are glorifying Him.

## **THE NEEDS OF THE WORK.**

Toronto is the oldest Finnish mission in Canada; the first missionary was secured by the Home Mission Board in 1907. Sylvan Lake, Alberta, and Cobalt District followed. Each of these three fields contains about 1,000 Finnish people. Copper Cliff is the youngest daughter of the Presbyterian Finnish mission work. The work was commenced by the present

writer in June, 1913. In this district there are in all some 3,000 Finns.

God has blessed the efforts of his servants, though their road has by no means been strewn with roses. For instance, Copper Cliff, which two years ago had a local society of the Socialist party with nearly two hundred paying members and hundreds of non-paying adherents, can now boast according to Socialist statistics, of only fifteen non-payers. Many of the surrounding places where there were strong societies have been wiped out of the Socialist statistical records.

But there is need for a larger number of faithful workers. There are thousands of good Finnish-Canadians waiting for the church to come to their help. There are Finnish farming settlements far in the woods without schools for their children and without any Christian institutions. I have visited places where young men of seventeen and eighteen have never seen a church or school building. It may be said that missionaries are not supposed to take up the work of school teachers, but missionaries can help to get schools into those far-away places. If we had more men on the field, the Finnish people could be served much more effectively than only four can do, though they put their life and soul into the work.

It is an immense problem that has to be faced, but some great body of Christians must endeavor to solve it. The Presby-

terian Church has opened the fields now in existence, and it is to be hoped that the reader will help to keep them open, and to extend the good work.