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A SHORT HISTORY OF CANADA UNDER BRITISH RULE.

CHAPTER I.

THE FRENCH RÉGIME. 1534—1760.

SECTION 1.—*Introduction.*

THOUGH the principal object of this book is to review the political, economic and social progress of the provinces of Canada under British rule, yet it would be necessarily imperfect, and even unintelligible in certain important respects, were I to ignore the deeply interesting history of the sixteen hundred thousand French Canadians, about thirty per cent. of the total population of the Dominion. To apply to Canada an aphorism of Carlyle, "The present is the living sum-total of the whole past"; the sum-total not simply of the hundred and thirty years that have elapsed since the commencement of British dominion, but primarily of the century and a half that began with the coming of Champlain to the heights of Quebec and ended with the death of Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham. The soldiers and sailors, the missionaries and pioneers of France, speak to us in eloquent tones, whether we linger in summer time on the shores of the noble gulf which washes the eastern portals of Canada; whether we ascend the St Lawrence River and follow the route taken by the explorers, who discovered the great

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lakes, and gave to the world a knowledge of the West and the Mississippi; whether we walk on the grassy mounds that recall the ruins of the formidable fortress of Louisbourg, which once defended the eastern entrance to the St Lawrence; whether we linger on the rocks of the ancient city of Quebec with its many memorials of the French régime; whether we travel over the rich prairies with their sluggish, tortuous rivers, and memories of the French Canadians who first found their way to that illimitable region. In fact, Canada has a rich heritage of associations that connect us with some of the most momentous epochs of the world's history. The victories of Louisbourg and Quebec belong to the same series of brilliant events that recall the famous names of Chatham, Clive, and Wolfe, and that gave to England a mighty empire in Asia and America. Wolfe's signal victory on the heights of the ancient capital was the prelude to the great drama of the American revolution. Freed from the fear of France, the people of the Thirteen Colonies, so long hemmed in between the Atlantic Ocean and the Appalachian range, found full expression for their love of local self-government when England asserted her imperial supremacy. After a struggle of a few years they succeeded in laying the foundation of the remarkable federal republic, which now embraces some fifty states with a population of about eighty-five millions, and which owes its national stability and prosperity to the energy and enterprise of the Anglo-Norman race and the dominant influence of the common law, and the parliamentary institutions of England. At the same time, the American revolution had an immediate and powerful effect upon the future of the communities that still remained in the possession of England after the acknowledgement of the independence of her old colonies. It drove to Canada a large body of men and women, who remained faithful to the crown and empire and became founders of provinces which are now comprised in a Dominion extending for over three thousand miles to the north and east of the federal republic.

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The short review of the French régime, with which I am about to commence this history of Canada, will not give any evidence of political, economic, or intellectual development under the influence of French dominion, but it is interesting to the student of comparative politics on account of the comparisons which it enables us to make between the absolutism of old France which crushed every semblance of independent thought and action, and the political freedom which has been a consequence of the supremacy of England in the province once occupied by her ancient rival. It is quite true, as Professor Freeman has said, that in Canada, which is pre-eminently English in the development of its political institutions, French Canada is still "a distinct and visible element, which is not English,—an element older than anything English in the land,—and which shows no sign of being likely to be assimilated by anything English." As this book will show, though a hundred and forty years have nearly passed since the signing of the treaty of Paris, many of the institutions which the French Canadians inherited from France have become permanently established in the country, and we see constantly in the various political systems given to Canada from time to time—notably in the constitution of the federal union—the impress of these institutions and the influence of the people of the French section. Still, while the French Canadians by their adherence to their language, civil law and religion, are decidedly "a distinct and visible element which is not English"—an element kept apart from the English by positive legal and constitutional guarantees or barriers of separation,—we shall see that it is the influence and operation of English institutions, which have made their province one of the most contented communities of the world. While their old institutions are inseparably associated with the social and spiritual conditions of their daily lives, it is after all their political constitution, which derives its strength from English principles, that has made the French Canadians a free, self-

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governing people and developed the best elements of their character to a degree which was never possible under the depressing and enfeebling conditions of the French régime.

SECTION 2.—*Discovery and settlement of Canada by France.*

Much learning has been devoted to the elucidation of the Icelandic Sagas, or vague accounts of voyages which Biorne Heriulfson and Lief Ericsson, sons of the first Norse settlers of Greenland, are supposed to have made at the end of the tenth century, to the eastern parts of what is now British North America, and, in the opinion of some writers, even as far as the shores of New England. It is just possible that such voyages were made, and that Norsemen were the first Europeans who saw the eastern shores of Canada. It is quite certain, however, that no permanent settlements were made by the Norsemen in any part of these countries; and their voyages do not appear to have been known to Columbus or other maritime adventurers of later times, when the veil of mystery was at last lifted from the western limits of what was so long truly described as the "sea of darkness." While the subject is undoubtedly full of interest, it is at the same time as illusive as the *fata morgana*, or the lakes and rivers that are created by the mists of a summer's eve on the great prairies of the Canadian west.

Five centuries later than the Norse voyagers, there appeared on the great field of western exploration an Italian sailor, Giovanni Caboto, through whose agency England took the first step in the direction of that remarkable maritime enterprise which, in later centuries, was to be the admiration and envy of all other nations. John Cabot was a Genoese by birth and a Venetian citizen by adoption, who came, during the last decade of the fifteenth century, to the historic town of Bristol.

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Eventually he obtained from Henry VII letters-patent, granting to himself and his three sons, Louis, Sebastian and Sancio, the right, "at their own cost and charges, to seek out and discover unknown lands," and to acquire for England the dominion over the countries they might discover. Early in May, 1497, John Cabot sailed from Bristol in "The Matthew," manned by English sailors. In all probability he was accompanied by Sebastian, then about 21 years of age, who, in later times, through the credulity of his friends and his own garrulity and vanity, took that place in the estimation of the world which his father now rightly fills. Some time toward the end of June, they made a land-fall on the north-eastern coast of North America. The actual site of the land-fall will always be a matter of controversy unless some document is found among musty archives of Europe to solve the question to the satisfaction of the disputants, who wax hot over the claims of a point near Cape Chidley on the coast of Labrador, of Bonavista on the east shore of Newfoundland, of Cape North, or some other point, on the island of Cape Breton. Another expedition left Bristol in 1498, but while it is now generally believed that Cabot coasted the shores of North America from Labrador or Cape Breton as far as Cape Hatteras, we have no details of this famous voyage, and are even ignorant of the date when the fleet returned to England.

The Portuguese, Gaspar and Miguel Cortereal, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, were lost somewhere on the coast of Labrador or Newfoundland, but not before they gave to their country a claim to new lands. The Basques and Bretons, always noted for their love of the sea, frequented the same prolific waters and some of the latter gave a name to the picturesque island of Cape Breton. Giovanni da Verrazzano, a Florentine by birth, who had for years led a roving life on the sea, sailed in 1524 along the coasts of Nova Scotia and the present United States and gave a shadowy claim of first discovery of a great region to France under whose authority he

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sailed. Ten years later Jacques Cartier of St Malo was authorised by Francis I to undertake a voyage to these new lands, but he did not venture beyond the Gulf of St Lawrence, though he took possession of the picturesque Gaspé peninsula in the name of his royal master. In 1535 he made a second voyage, whose results were most important for France and the world at large. The great river of Canada was then discovered by the enterprising Breton, who established a post for some months at Stadacona, now Quebec, and also visited the Indian village of Hochelaga on the island of Montreal. Here he gave the appropriate name of Mount Royal to the beautiful height which dominates the picturesque country where enterprise has, in the course of centuries, built a noble city. Hochelaga was probably inhabited by Indians of the Huron-Iroquois family, who appear, from the best evidence before us, to have been dwelling at that time on the banks of the St Lawrence, whilst the Algonquins, who took their place in later times, were living to the north of the river.

The name of Canada—obviously the Huron-Iroquois word for Kannata, a town—began to take a place on the maps soon after Cartier's voyages. It appears from his *Bref Récit* to have been applied at the time of his visit, to a kingdom, or district, extending from Ile-aux-Coudres, which he named on account of its hazel-nuts, on the lower St Lawrence, to the Kingdom of Ochelay, west of Stadacona; east of Canada was Saguenay, and west of Ochelay was Hochelaga, to which the other communities were tributary. After a winter of much misery Cartier left Stadacona in the spring of 1536, and sailed into the Atlantic by the passage between Cape Breton and Newfoundland, now appropriately called Cabot's Straits on modern maps. He gave to France a positive claim to a great region, whose illimitable wealth and possibilities were never fully appreciated by the king and the people of France even in the later times of her dominion. Francis, in 1540, gave a commission to Jean François de la Rocque, Sieur de Roberval, to

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act as his viceroy and lieutenant-general in the country discovered by Cartier, who was elevated to the position of captain general and master pilot of the new expedition. As the Viceroy was unable to complete his arrangements by 1541, Cartier was obliged to sail in advance, and again passed a winter on the St Lawrence, not at Stadacona but at Cap Rouge, a few miles to the west, where he built a post which he named Charlesbourg-Royal. He appears to have returned to France some time during the summer of 1542, while Roberval was on his way to the St Lawrence. Roberval found his way without his master pilot to Charlesbourg-Royal, which he re-named France-Roy, and where he erected buildings of a very substantial character in the hope of establishing a permanent settlement. His selection of colonists—chiefly taken from jails and purlieus of towns—was most unhappy, and after a bitter experience he returned to France, probably in the autumn of 1543, and disappeared from Canadian history.

From the date of Cartier's last voyage until the beginning of the seventeeth century, a period of nearly sixty years, nothing was done to settle the lands of the new continent. Fishermen and fur-traders frequented the great gulf, which was called for years the "Square gulf," or "Golfo quadrado," or "Quarré," on some European maps, until it assumed, by the end of the sixteenth century, the name it now bears. The name Saint-Laurens was first given by Cartier to the harbour known as Sainte-Geneviève (or sometimes Pillage Bay), on the northern shore of Canada, and gradually extended to the gulf and river. The name of Labrador, which was soon established on all maps, had its origin in the fact that Gaspar Cortereal brought back with him a number of natives who were considered to be "admirably calculated for labour."

In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the English began to take a prominent part in that maritime enterprise which was to lead to such remarkable results in the course of three centuries. The names of the ambitious navigators, Frobisher and Davis, are

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connected with those arctic waters where so much money, energy, and heroism have been expended down to the present time. Under the influence of the great Ralegh, whose fertile imagination was conceiving plans of colonization in America, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, his brother-in-law, took possession of Newfoundland on a hill overlooking the harbour of St John's. English enterprise, however, did not extend for many years to any other part of North Eastern America than Newfoundland, which is styled Baccalaos on the Hakluyt map of 1597, though the present name appeared from a very early date in English statutes and records. The island, however, for a century and longer, was practically little more than "a great ship moored near the banks during the fishing season, for the convenience of English fishermen," while English colonizing enterprise found a deeper interest in Virginia with its more favourable climate and southern products. It was England's great rival, France, that was the pioneer at the beginning of the seventeenth century in the work of exploring and settling the countries now comprised within the Dominion of Canada.

France first attempted to settle the indefinite region, long known as *La Cadie* or *Acadie*[1]. The Sieur de Monts, Samuel Champlain, and the Baron de Poutrincourt were the pioneers in the exploration of this country. Their first post was erected on Dochet Island, within the mouth of the St Croix River, the present boundary between the state of Maine and the province of New Brunswick; but this spot was very soon found unsuitable, and the hopes of the pioneers were immediately turned towards the beautiful basin, which was first named Port

[1] This name is now generally admitted to belong to the language of the Micmac Indians of the Atlantic provinces. It means a place, or locality, and is always associated with another word descriptive of some special natural production; for instance, Shubenacadie, or Segubunakade, is the place where the ground-nut, or Indian potato, grows. We find the first official mention of the word in the commission given by Henry IV of France to the Sieur de Monts in 1604.

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Royal by Champlain. The Baron de Poutrincourt obtained a grant of land around this basin, and determined to make his home in so beautiful a spot. De Monts, whose charter was revoked in 1607, gave up the project of colonizing Acadia, whose history from that time is associated for years with the misfortunes of the Biencourts, the family name of Baron de Poutrincourt; but the hopes of this adventurous nobleman were never realized. In 1613 an English expedition from Virginia, under the command of Captain Argall, destroyed the struggling settlement at Fort Royal, and also prevented the establishment of a Jesuit mission on the island of Monts-Déserts, which owes its name to Champlain. Acadia had henceforth a checquered history, chiefly noted for feuds between rival French leaders and for the efforts of the people of New England to obtain possession of Acadia. Port Royal was captured in 1710 by General Nicholson, at the head of an expedition composed of an English fleet and the militia of New England. Then it received the name of Annapolis Royal in honour of Queen Anne, and was formally ceded with all of Acadia "according to its ancient limits" to England by the treaty of Utrecht.

It was not in Acadia, but in the valley of the St Lawrence, that France made her great effort to establish her dominion in North America. Samuel Champlain, the most famous man in the history of French Canada, laid the foundation of the present city of Quebec in the month of June, 1608, or three years after the removal of the little Acadian colony from St Croix Island to the basin of the Annapolis. The name Quebec is now generally admitted to be an adaptation of an Indian word, meaning a contraction of the river or strait, a distinguishing feature of the St Lawrence at this important point. The first buildings were constructed by Champlain on a relatively level piece of ground, now occupied by a market-house and close to a famous old church erected in the days of Frontenac, in commemoration of the victorious repulse

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of the New England expedition led by Phipps. For twenty-seven years Champlain struggled against constantly accumulating difficulties to establish a colony on the St Lawrence. He won the confidence of the Algonquin and Huron tribes of Canada, who then lived on the St Lawrence and Ottawa rivers, and in the vicinity of Georgian Bay. Recognizing the necessity of an alliance with the Canadian Indians, who controlled all the principal avenues to the great fur-bearing regions, he led two expeditions, composed of Frenchmen, Hurons, and Algonquins, against the Iroquois or Confederacy of the Five Nations[1]—the Mohawks, the Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas—who inhabited the fertile country stretching from the Genesee to the Hudson River in the present state of New York. Champlain consequently excited against his own people the inveterate hostility of the bravest, cruellest and ablest Indians with whom Europeans have ever come in contact in America. Champlain probably had no other alternative open to him than to become the active ally of the Canadian Indians, on whose goodwill and friendship he was forced to rely; but it is also quite probable that he altogether underrated the ability and bravery of the Iroquois who, in later years, so often threatened the security of Canada, and more than once brought the infant colony to the very verge of ruin.

It was during Champlain's administration of affairs that the Company of the Hundred Associates was formed under the auspices of Cardinal Richelieu, with the express object of colonizing Canada and developing the fur-trade and other commercial enterprises on as large a scale as possible. The Company had ill-fortune from the outset. The first expedition it sent to the St Lawrence was captured by a fleet commanded by David Kirk, a gentleman of Derbyshire, who in the following year also took Quebec, and carried Champlain and his

[1] In 1715 the confederacy was joined by the Tuscaroras, a southern branch of the same family, and was then called more properly the Six Nations.

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