



Sir John A.'s Crusade and Seward's Magnificent Folly (Britain's Real Downton Abbey and Canada's Birth)

Richard Rohmer

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International intrigue on the eve of the birth of a nation at Britain's Highclere Castle, aka Downton Abbey.

In late 1866, John A. Macdonald and other Fathers of Confederation arrived in London to begin discussions with Britain to create Canada. Macdonald and two of his colleagues stayed briefly at Highclere Castle in Hampshire, the stately home of the Fourth Earl of Carnarvon, Britain's colonial secretary. Those are the facts.

Today Highclere Castle is widely known as the real-life location for the popular television series *Downton Abbey*. In Richard Rohmer's novel, Macdonald talks with Carnarvon at Highclere about legislation to give Canada autonomy, the danger of Irish Fenian assassination plots, and the proposed American purchase of Alaska from Russia. Later, back in London, a fire partially destroys Macdonald's hotel room, and the future prime minister, trying to curb his fondness for alcohol, woos and marries his second wife, Agnes. In the end, Macdonald wins the passage of the British North America Act but fails in his bid for Alaska when U.S. Secretary of State William Seward buys that strategic territory.

Secret deals, romance, and international intrigue all figure in this rousing tale of historical speculation set on the eve of the birth of a nation.

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