

PREFACE.

on Lake Erie, a neglect which caused the two worst disasters of the war. My authority for this statement is the narrative of Mrs. Amelia Harris, as published in Dr. Ryerson's History of the Loyalists. I have derived much assistance from the valuable work of Mr. James, which was published in the year 1818, and the authority of which as a record of facts cannot be questioned. I have seen many severe criticisms of his work, but not one in which any statement made by him was shown to be incorrect.

No doubt it will be said by some critics that in this book I have been too severe on the Americans who invaded our country, burnt our towns, ravaged our fields, slaughtered our people and tried to place us under a foreign flag. But I maintain that any Canadian author has a right to challenge the motives and the conduct of the men who did these things, and I see no reason why any American of the present day should feel offended at reflections on the actions of men who lived 90 years ago. While endeavoring to present an absolutely truthful narrative of the War of 1812, I have not felt it necessary to refrain from criticizing the conduct of the men who were responsible for the contest or who took part in it.

This book contains many references to the work of Mr. Benson J. Lossing, which was published more than 30 years ago and which has had a very large circulation in Canada. Lossing's book is full of mis-statements and blunders, and therefore, I have thought it necessary in many instances to criticize it and correct it. Lossing seems to have accepted as true, every statement unfavorable to the British, which he could find in any of the numerous American histories of the war, which were published shortly after its close, and the result is that