

## PREFACE.

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HISTORICAL writing is too often a mere detailed sketch of campaigns and leaders—political, military or naval. The brilliant deeds of an army chief, the struggles of a party leader, the character of a prominent statesman, the fantasies of some passing demagogue, are given more attention than the pioneer labours of the settlers who founded a nation, the efforts of an entire people to obtain their daily bread, the general characteristics and attainments of the population of a country, or the silent, subtle undercurrents of sentiment which so largely help to make history, to create nations and to control or mould their permanent policy.

In the records of the Provinces which constitute the present Dominion of Canada altogether too much stress has been usually laid upon political struggles and the achievements of party leaders. Francis Parkman, it is true, has done brilliant justice to that stormy and sombre period which preceded the opening of the nineteenth century, and which presents to the eye of the mind so vast a panorama of shadowy forms—Indians and explorers, Jesuits and missionaries, hunters and trappers, soldiers of France and soldiers of England—moving over more

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