

TWO FRONTIER CHURCHES.

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It ought to be an interesting and instructive task to trace the history of these two churches of Niagara, St. Mark's and St. Andrew's, dating almost a century back, the one 1792, the other 1794, and see how many links in the history of our town and even of our country can be filled in from those records, which give an ever shifting kaleidoscope of different nationalities, of pioneer life, of military occupation, of the red man, Britain's faithful ally, of the poor slave here for the first time by any nation freed by legal enactment, of strenuous efforts for religious liberty by appeals to Governor and Queen, of sweet church bells, of booming cannons and blazing roof-trees.

The often-repeated sneer that Canada has no history has been so easily refuted in the case of our eastern Provinces with their store of French chivalry and Saxon force, of missionary zeal and Indian barbarities, of fortresses taken and retaken, but still the phrase lingers with regard to Ontario. Surely, we in this Niagara peninsula lack nothing to disprove a statement which, to their shame, many among us allow to pass as if it were a truth. When we think that within the last two centuries four races have here fought for empire, that within sight of us are traces of the adventurous La Salle who traversed thousands of miles by sea and land to perish so miserably on the banks of the river of his search; when we think of this spot as an Indian camping ground, of the lilies of France yielding to our own flag even before Wolfe's great victory, of the landing here of loyal men driven from their homes of plenty to hew out in the forests of this new land a shelter under the flag they loved, of invasion, and three years of bitter strife, surely we have a right to say we have a history.

In my attempt to sketch the story of these two churches I have an ample store of very different materials, a picturesque grey stone church with projecting buttresses and square tower peeping through the branches of magnificent old trees, many tablets inside and out, tombstones hacked and defaced by the rude hand of war, an old register dating back to 1792, kept with scrupulous neatness, all these in the one case; in the