

# First Canadian Epoch.

BY THE

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## PART I.

### CHAPTER I

#### CONFEDERATED STATE.

Eight hundred years before the colonization of Canada and for more than a century and a half after that event, that system of law known as feudal, was the one dominant system of Continental Europe. It was but the result of the undissolved sovereignty and custom of each little army of warrior-princes that invaded the Roman Empire from the second century to the seventh and incorporated portions of the general law of Rome after the manner in which they recognized the suzerainty of the Roman Emperor. This undissolved sovereignty of the Burgundians, of the Goths, of the Salic French, of the Riparian Franks, of the Normands, of the Bretons, with their various customs made of each a separate state in the empire, each sovereign and independent within itself, under its king, or count. The Roman emperor gave place to the king of the

Franks in the person of Charlemagne in the year 800, who, without disturbing the autonomy of the various states of Europe, of which these are but a few, caused them to recognize him as their suzerain and feudal superior.

Thus from the beginning of the feudal system its spirit, its vital element, is seen to be the preservation of the national individualities which compose the sovereign state, so that the state, instead of being a homogeneous unity, solid and unwieldy, became a constellation guided by one principle—loyalty to the chief.

No greater disgrace could befall a vassal of the crown than a failure to perform his obligations of fealty. All the other vassals, chiefs of states in the confederacy, were bound to assist the sovereign to dispossess the one who might be so dishonorable to his trust—to the spirit of the feud.

On the other hand, a sovereign who failed in his mandium, or obligations, towards his vassals, received not only their