

## PREFACE.

---

**T**HE modest qualifications which the author claims for undertaking a task of the magnitude which the title of this volume assumes are based chiefly upon his own personal experience in the political arena, and on having carefully studied all the published Canadian and British-American histories, of which there are not a few.

His recollections of political events date from reading and hearing, at the age of twelve years, of the burning of the Parliament Buildings, and the mobbing of Lord Elgin, in Montreal, in 1849. He is prompted by a sincere desire to provide a reliable and impartial book of reference, embracing a period from the year 1608 down to the present time, with the hope that the book, despite imperfections incidental to a work of this kind, will prove a useful and interesting contribution to the political literature of our country, and at the same time aid in the commendable promotion of dignity and amenity in politics. The proper and impartial study of politics is a duty incumbent on the patriotic citizens of all countries, who should also at the same time remember the sound proverb, that "righteousness exalteth a nation."

The following pages of this work will, at least, give an outline of the various phases, systems, and vicissitudes of government through which our country and its chief actors have passed, and which have eventually culminated in our present admirable