

CANADA AND THE EMPIRE

PART I.

GENESIS OF IMPERIAL FEDERATION.

THE closing years of the Nineteenth Century will be memorable in the annals of the British Empire, as a period when the people and politicians of the United Kingdom and the great self-governing dependencies of the Crown awakened to the fact of their being possessed of the grandest Imperial patrimony and the greatest heritage of potential power that had ever been conferred upon a people, or family of nations. Few there are to-day who realize how much a British subject has to be proud of, and what enormous strides the Empire of Britain is making in commercial progress, maritime power, territorial increase, military strength and political development. With a total Imperial wealth of 63,000 millions of dollars, in round numbers; a mutual trade between the different parts of the Empire of 1,450 millions; a foreign commerce of 5,500 millions; a population of 20 millions; an area of nearly nine million square miles, or one-seventh of the land surface of the globe; with a coast line of 28,500 miles; a merchant navy of 30,000 ships, manned by 170,000 sailors; a sea-going tonnage of eight and a-half millions, and a revenue of 1,030 millions of dollars, we may well exclaim in those prophetic words of Mr. Gladstone: "We of this generation and nation occupy the Gibraltar of the ages, which commands the world's future."

The possessions of the British people embrace the three great countries of Australia, Canada and India, each of the two former having an area equal to that of all Europe, and sixty-nine territories and islands in the two hemispheres, having their affairs administered by over fifty subordinate governments. This great Empire, five times the size of the Persian Dominions under Darius, four times that of the Roman Empire under