

## PREFACE.

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EOGRAPHICALLY, the Province of Ontario may be considered as the heart of Canada. Her navigable lakes and rivers are the arteries that vitally connect the Atlantic seaboard to the great provinces of the west, while they afford a convenient and valuable means of transportation to her own trade and commerce.

The development of her natural resources has been steady. The field and the forest are yielding of their best to the touch of the specialist; the fisheries and the mines are beginning to show to the explorer and capitalist the magnitude of their all but exhaustless wealth; while the new land of the north offers millions of fertile acres to the enterprising husbandmen who may seek homes on its virgin soil.

The old and the new are combined. The great northland known but yesterday as "New Ontario," is to-day the scene of bustling mining camps, and progressive towns, of railway extension and the manifold activities of sleepless business enterprise—lavishing its untold wealth on the fortunate ones, and holding out inducements "beyond the dreams of avarice." The southern or old counties, that more than a century ago yielded to the axe of the United Empire Loyalist and the British immigrant, have long outgrown the pioneer stage. The well-tilled field, the laden orchard, the comfortable home; the busy artisan, merchant and manufacturer, alike bespeak long-established conditions. Public duty has kept pace with individual advancement. The liberty of the subject, civil and religious, and the rights of property are held in high regard. Democratic government is tempered by wise counsel and directed to the public good. Learning has flourished, its institutions are generously supported by the people, and a high standard of intelligence prevails. The amenities of social life are extensively practised; the people are essentially hospitable, peace-loving and well-behaved.

Ontario, thus happily circumstanced, has a story, interesting and