

## PREFACE



WE have tried in this volume to link up some of the honorable achievements of militia men of York County for a century back and show what the response has been when the bugle sounded or the alarm bell rang. We think we can discern in the men of this county a continuity of character; of deceptive equanimity in time of peace, of alacrity in time of war, of unchangeable faith in the Empire at all times.

We need not pretend that the officers and men of 1912 in the 12th Regiment are the precise lineal descendants of the officers and men of the York Regiments of 1812, any more than the Welsh Fusiliers need show they answer to the same names at roll-call as when they advanced with drums beating at the Battle of Minden. The continuity of a regiment is not at any time very tangible or definite. It is not a genealogy written by a lawyer to secure an estate. It is rather the spirit to undertake similar toils and endure similar dangers in consideration of being allowed to keep the old glory and the old heroes in dutiful remembrance and to emulate them if occasion arise.

It is time the histories of all our county regiments were written. Despite a number of charming books in which fragments of our Upper Canadian history have been transcribed by men of scholarly style and antiquarian attainments, the real history of nearly every county is being irremediably lost. This is particularly true of the military history of our counties, which when studied repays the student by glimpses of heroic action and then baffles him with records broken and defaced by callous neglect.

Most of our old county histories and atlases were written on a subscription plan which was unavoidable in a country where the arts of literature and publishing were struggling and precarious vocations. Under such a plan the man who could pay for his biography became a personage, while the man who could not was allowed to seek an ignoble grave. This bore hard upon the military veteran who is seldom the most prosperous or provident of men.

We are therefore much indebted to the subscribers and advertisers whose liberality has enabled this sketch to be produced.

A. T. HUNTER.