

munity of those early times ; its quaint manners and curious laws ; its thoroughly English blending of religion and thrift, remarked by all observers from Emerson down to Max O'Rell ; its established church ; its tolerance, nevertheless, of Calvinists, Lutherans, and Quakers ; its abhorrence of popery ; its modest, but hearty provision for the education of the community ; its seemingly meddling, but well-meant, and perhaps necessary and beneficial, interference with the laws of demand and supply ; its artificial, but, in the main, equitable, adjustments of the relations of capital and labor ; its old-fashioned indentures and apprenticeships ; its assize of bread ; its minute regulations of the width of carriage-wheels ; its incursions of thriftless sailors and marines, bearing up for the nearest grog-shop to trade off their "slop-cloaths" for rum ; its foes without and fears within from Indians and French, and later on from traitors and rebels ; and, throughout it all, its bravery, sobriety, justice, loyalty and progress ! It was the world in miniature of a hundred years ago ; and it requires an effort of the imagination to call up the positive and negative qualities and characteristics that made it what it was. As Froude, in one of his most eloquent and poetic passages, has said of mediæval England : "And now it is all gone—like 'an unsubstantial pageant faded'—and between us and those old days and times 'there lies a gulf of mystery which the prose of the historian will never adequately bridge. They cannot come to us, and our imagination can but feebly penetrate to them.'" Only from these old volumes, in which they left the most enduring memorials of their manner of life and way of thinking, can we in fancy reconstruct, in some degree, the social and political fabric that has passed forever from our view.

The volume before us covers the period from 1758 to 1776. Beginning with the days of Louisbourg and Ticonderoga—when New Englanders

and Nova Scotians fought side by side on land and sea for the perpetuation of English rule, and builded better than they knew by establishing in this western world the ascendancy of the Teutonic race—it ends with what the preambles of the various acts refer to sometimes as "a most daring and unnatural rebellion," and sometimes as "a most unnatural and dangerous rebellion against the laws of Great Britain and His Majesty's government in his colonies in America." The stirring events of the period that intervened must needs have left their trace upon the statute book ; and in the elaborate preambles, in which it was then the custom to state at length and in detail the reasons for the various enactments, we have not only a glimpse, but often a flood of light, thrown upon the history of the period through which we pass. Previous to the convening of the first General Assembly of the province, the legislative authority was vested in the Sovereign and council, and many of the earlier statutes of the first Assembly were passed either to confirm or to vary the resolutions or acts of the Governor and council. Such is the first act in the volume, which recites that "it has been thought necessary by His Majesty's governors and council of this province, before the calling of a General Assembly, to lay a duty of three pence a gallon on all rum and other distilled spirituous liquors imported into this province, excepting the product and manufacture of Great Britain or of His Majesty's West India plantations, imported directly from thence," which import duty enabled them to grant bounties and premiums from time to time "for clearing and fencing lands, catching and curing codfish, and other necessary encouragements to labor and industry." It is needless to point out that in this enactment we have a glimpse of the old colonial system, an actual case of the preferential trade within the empire which is the creed of a small, but active, body