

PREFACE

It is no easy thing to write a competent and reliable history of any country covering four centuries of time. Jacques Cartier discovered Canada about forty years after Columbus stumbled upon the Continent of America.

Further, if the period is long, Canadian history also presents peculiar difficulties in the varied, obscure, and sometimes uncertain sources of its development.

Effort after effort has been made to write stories of Canadian life, "drum and trumpet histories," accounts of its battles, invasions, startling incidents, and amusing domestic life, but these do not make up a comprehensive and satisfying history.

Going to the other extreme, numerous Canadian writers have collected vast vistas of dates and statistics, "dry-as-dust" compilations of the rise and fall of ministries, dreary chronicles of Parliament, tedious party reminiscences, and sapless condensations of legal enactments.

Few can read and profit from such history. Probably in the field of English History the most successful work of history, in a useful, compact, and attractive volume, has been "Green's Short History of the English People."

While Macaulay, though beautiful in style, imagination, and invective, proves biassed and unsatisfying, Hallam too prosy and serious, though accurate and just, Froude plainly one-sided and somewhat inaccurate, Green is