

PREFACE.

THE drama of "Laura Secord" was written to rescue from oblivion the name of a brave woman, and set it in its proper place among the heroes of Canadian history. During the first few years of her residence in Canada the author was often astonished to hear it remarked, no less among educated than uneducated Canadians, that "Canada has no history;" and yet on every hand stories were current of the achievements of the pioneers, and the hardships endured and overcome by the United Empire Loyalists. Remembering that, as soon as she had conquered the merest rudiments of reading and grammar at school, she was set to learn English History, and so become acquainted with the past of her country, it seemed to the writer that there was something lacking in a course of teaching that could leave Canadians to think that their country had no historical past. Determined to seek out for herself the facts of the case, it was with feelings of the deepest interest that she read such of the contributions to the newspaper press as came in her way during the debate with regard to the pensions asked of Government for the surviving veterans of 1812 in 1873-4. Among these was incidentally given the story of Mrs. Secord's heroic deed in warning Fitzgibbon. Yet it could not pass without observation that, while the heroism of the men of that date was dwelt upon with warm appreciation and much urgency as to their deserts, Mrs. Secord, as being a woman, shared in nothing more tangible than an approving record. The story, to a woman's mind, was full of pathos, and, though barren of great incidents, was not without a due richness of colouring if looked at by appreciative eyes. Nor were the results of Laura Secord's brave deed insignificant. Had the Americans carried Beaver Dams at that juncture, the whole peninsula was before them—all its supplies, all its means of communication with other parts of the Province. And Canada—Upper Canada, at least—would have been in the hands of the invaders until, by a struggle too severe to be contemplated calmly, they had been driven forth. To save from the sword is surely as great a deed as to save with the sword; and this Laura Secord did, at an expense of nerve and muscle fully equal to any that are recorded of the warrior. To set her on such a pedestal of equality; to inspire other hearts with loyal bravery such as hers; to write her name on the roll of Canadian heroes, inspired the poem that bears her name. But the tribute to her memory would not be complete were it to omit an appeal to Canadians, especially to the inhabitants of this Province, who, in their prosperity owe to her so much, to do their part, and write her name in enduring marble upon the spot where she lies buried.