

INTRODUCTION.

TO fully appreciate the wealth of his character, the magnanimity of his mind, his attractive personality, gracious manner, and well-balanced judgment one must needs have known MR. CROIL in his public and private life. Born of a worthy Scotch ancestry, educated in the best of Scotland's Grammar schools and colleges, and with a mind richly endowed by nature, he was a keen student of men and things, and readily secured for himself an acknowledged place among the best men and women of his time. He also travelled widely, observed keenly and brought under tribute an experience that was varied and in many ways exceptional.

MR. CROIL possessed a strong and striking personality. His manly stature, dignified demeanour and withal his courtly and kindly bearing distinguished him among his fellows. From early manhood he developed a taste for literary pursuits and although choosing for his occupation farming in Ontario, he was restless in so limited a range of public activity and finally broke from it. Or to put it in his own words "From boyhood I was afflicted with the '*cacoethis scribendi*' a malady which in riper years did not ameliorate, for like the woman of old who spent all that she had on physicians I was "nothing bettered but rather grew worse." About the year 1860 a prize of one hundred dollars was offered for the best "County Report" in Upper Canada and he readily accepted the challenge winning first honours and the goodly prize. He was at once accorded a place in the ranks of descriptive writers. Encouraged by this achievement he became keenly ambitious to climb still higher, and in the following year (1861) he elaborated his essay and published an edition of 2,000 volumes under the title "Dundas" or "A Sketch of Canadian History."