

INTRODUCTION.

EVERY monograph which throws light on the making of Canada should be heartily welcomed, and therefore I willingly write a brief preface for this one, entitled "IN THE DAYS OF THE CANADA COMPANY." Men have disputed, and will dispute, whether the Company was beneficial or hurtful to Canada, the fact being that it was both, and that the balance is likely to be struck according to their interests or preconceptions; but no one disputes the claims to honour of John Galt, its founder, and of agents like Dunlop, Pryor and Strickland. With what is probably the last of the great Chartered Companies now on its trial before the bar of British opinion and a select committee of the Imperial House of Commons, we are slow to admit that a democratic Government is entitled to delegate any of its important functions to private individuals; but the Government of Canada, in 1824, was not responsible to the people, and it was a good thing that it consented to the formation of the Company. At any rate, as regards colonization, road and bridge-building, and the equitable partition or sale of the public domain, things for some time had been so bad, as poor Robert Gourlay, William Lyon Mackenzie and others proved to their own hurt, that they could hardly be worse. The arrival of Galt made them better, and had he been sustained by the directorate in London, who represented the shareholders, the Company would probably have won for itself as honourable a name, on its own smaller scale, as history accords to the Hudson's Bay and the East India Companies. But he was too big a man for his masters, and London was too far away from the Huron Tract to