

PREFACE

To re-create the shadowy figures of the heroic past, to clothe the dead once more in flesh and blood, to set the puppets of the play in life's great dramas again upon the stage of action, — frankly, this may not be formal history, but it is what makes the past most real to the present day. Pictures of men and women, of moving throngs and heroic episodes, stick faster in the mind than lists of governors and arguments on treaties. Such pictures may not be history, but they breathe life into the skeletons of the past.

Canada's past is more dramatic than any romance ever penned. The story of that past has been told many times and in many volumes, with far digressions on Louisiana and New England and the kingcraft of Europe. The trouble is, the story has not been told in one volume. Too much has been attempted. To include the story of New England wars and Louisiana's pioneer days, the story of Canada itself has been either cramped or crowded. To the eastern writer, Canada's history has been the record of French and English conflict. To him there has been practically no Canada west of the Great Lakes; and in order to tell the intrigue of European tricksters, very often the writer has been compelled to exclude the story of the Canadian people, — meaning by people the breadwinners, the toilers, rather than the governing classes. Similarly, to the western writer, Canada meant the Hudson's Bay Company. As for the Pacific coast, it has been almost ignored in any story of Canada.

Needless to say, a complete history of a country as vast as Canada, whose past in every section fairly teems with action, could not be crowded into one volume. To give even the story