

## The Legal News.

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The Hon. Francis Godschall Johnson, the new Chief Justice of the Superior Court for this province, is a man who has filled a brilliant part in the history of the country, and of whom our bar and bench have some reason to be proud. Born in England, 1st January, 1817, and educated at Harrow, and subsequently at St. Omer and Bruges, he came out to Canada at the age of 18, and was admitted to the bar in 1839. His elevation to the office of Chief Justice occurs, therefore, after half a century of active and continuous work at the bar and on the bench. With the natural gifts of the orator, with imagination, wit, and pleasing elocution, with a handsome presence and graceful and dignified bearing, it is not surprising that on his admission to the bar, Mr. Johnson speedily became a prominent figure among his confrères, and that his services were especially sought after in cases tried with juries. In 1854, he went to the then Hudson Bay territory, where he was for three years Governor of the settlement and of the district of Assiniboia, in which capacity he rendered valuable and important services. After his return to Montreal, Mr. Johnson was made Crown Prosecutor, an office which he filled with conspicuous ability and energy. In 1865, he was appointed to the bench of the Superior Court, his district being Bedford. Thence he was transferred to Montreal in 1872, and has since continued to discharge the onerous functions of a Judge in this district, besides fulfilling the duties, for some time past, of acting Chief Justice. After a service so long that he has become the senior justice of a bench numbering some thirty judges, his selection as Chief Justice, on a vacancy occurring, was most appropriate, and the bar of Montreal unanimously and strenuously urged the appointment. At the ripe age of 73, time has not dulled the brilliance of his intellectual gifts, nor impaired his capacity for work, and His Honour may reasonably

look forward to a long tenure of his new position. We presume that, in accordance with the precedent established, the Chief Justice will receive in due course the honour of knighthood; certainly, the title will in this instance be very fitly conferred.

Excursions into the realm of theology are not very appropriate in a legal brief, and an extravagance of the kind indulged by counsel in *Bardin v. Stevenson*, 75 N.Y. 164, quoted by the *Albany Law Journal*, would probably, under our system, be stricken from the record. "It is ever thus," says the author (Mr. James Gibson) "that Providence rules in the affairs of men, presenting to a wicked man an apparent open path to a successful crime, upon which he enters and pursues his object, finding at the end, instead of success, a yawning gulf swallowing him, as did that which swallowed Dathan and Abiram." The brief goes on to quote scripture and poetry, and finally dips into fiction, winding up with some good philosophy from Wilkie Collins: "It is impossible to do a secret evil work—it will be revealed—throw it in the sea, the water casts it up—bury it in the earth, and the earth holds it till examined, and then tells the tale." After all this rhetoric our readers will not be surprised to learn that the Court was not with Mr. Gibson.

The *Canada Gazette*, of Dec. 14, proclaims a very long list of barristers of Ontario, who have been appointed Her Majesty's Counsel. We presume that this is to be followed by an equally long list for the province of Quebec. The Ontario list, which numbers 47, is as follows:—James Robert Gowan, Barrie. James Henry Flock, London. Rupert Mearse Wells, Toronto. Ward Hamilton Bowlby, Berlin. Nicol Kingsmill, Toronto. Alexander John Cattanaach, Toronto. Huson William Munro Murray, Toronto. Joseph Deacon, Brockville. Duncan McMillan, London. John Davidson, Goderich. James Edward Farewell, Whitby. Alexander Millar, Berlin. Nicholas Murphy, Toronto. George Moncrieff, Petrolia. Robert Vashan Rogers, Kingston. Arthur Ratcliffe Boswell, Toronto. John Burnham, Peterboro. William Henry